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THE STORY OF  
WILLIAM CAXTON

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**H**ere doth, ~~the~~ ~~king~~ ~~and~~ ~~queen~~ ~~with~~ ~~their~~ ~~attendants~~  
 Earl Rivers with hys good prynters  
 William Caxton present hys  
 booke unto ye King hys Maestys.

# THE STORY OF WILLIAM CAXTON

*BY*

SUSAN CUNNINGTON

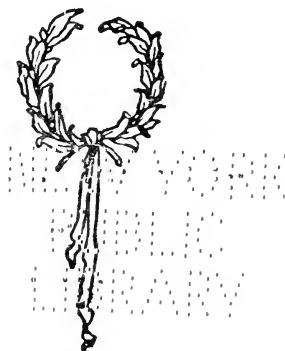
AUTHOR OF

'STORIES FROM DANTE' 'HOME AND STATE'

'THE STORY OF THOMAS BECKET'

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*WITH NINE ILLUSTRATIONS*



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## CHAPTER I: *The Kentish* *Home*

**W**ILLIAM CAXTON, whose father was a Kentish farmer, was born about the year 1421. He lived to the age of seventy, and during that time saw the accession of five kings to the throne. Those years were some of the most troublous in our history, yet to Caxton we owe the introduction of one of the most powerful of the arts of peace. In bringing to England the invention of printing he began a revolution of greater moment than that of any overthrow of crown or kingdom. The story of his life makes known to us many interesting features of fifteenth-century England.

Kent, popularly praised as 'the Garden of England,' was no garden when Caxton was born. A century before it had been famous for its fruit-trees and 'wort-yards' (orchards), but these were now neglected, and in the Weald the scenery was wild and the cultivation of the land difficult. Not far from Tunbridge is a small village called Hadlow, which is supposed to have been near the place of Caxton's birth; standing thus amid acres of moor, covered with low bushes of furze and thick tufts of heather. These growths, varied with thick coppice woods, though picturesque and charming to the modern eye, offered serious drawbacks to farming. The small villages and hamlets scattered over the Weald (once the ancient forest land) were inhabited by people whose hard lives and want of intercourse with other parts of the country kept them in a very

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primitive state. Years afterward, when Caxton was beginning the work which was to make him famous, he wrote in the preface to one of his translations: "I was born and learned mine English in Kent, in the Weald, where I doubt not is spoken as broad and rude English as in any place in England." Any one who has seen the lonely farms in the Cumberland or Derbyshire vales or on the Devonshire moors will have some idea of the kind of place which was the home of Caxton's boyhood.

In the fifteenth century Kent and Sussex were the 'Black Country' of England; and the timber of the ancient forest which once stretched over the greater part of those counties and into Hampshire served as fuel for the iron-smelting furnaces. The roads were bad, and across the Weald were often almost impassable; only those from Hythe and Sandwich to Canterbury, with its famous cathedral containing the shrine of Archbishop Thomas Becket, were occasionally repaired in the interests of the pilgrims journeying to and fro. For two centuries there had been a law that woods should be cleared away for two hundred yards on either side of main roads; but in many places they overgrew them, and besides making travel difficult they offered shelter to the many robbers who lay in wait for travellers. To-day in journeying through Kent the fruitful orchards and hop-gardens, and the comfortable farmsteads sheltered from the sea-breezes by clumps of hardy trees, make one think that life on a farm may be both prosperous and pleasant. But in the fifteenth century it was an altogether different scene.

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The three classes of people who owned or occupied land, or got their living by working on it, were the great nobles or abbots; the tenant-farmers, cultivating their own land or holding it at a rent from some abbey or castle; and the labourers or peasants. Rural England had not in Caxton's day recovered from the terrible pestilence (the Black Death) of nearly a hundred years before. So many people, and especially country people, had died that there were very few peasants in any part of the country compared with the numbers in the time of Edward III, and thus there was not sufficient labour to till and cultivate the land. The poorer village people had gradually for the past two centuries lost their little holdings of land and worked for hire. Their wages were fixed by Act of Parliament and were paid daily, to ensure that they should get nothing for the compulsory holidays; they were forbidden to leave their native place in search of work, and especially they were not permitted to go to towns in order to learn a trade. Their employers were hardly better off, although they had greater freedom. The land was often very poor—ill-dressed, ill-managed, and thus returning very small crops. Little was known as to differences of soil or the various kinds of produce for which they were suited; the extravagant fashion of permitting arable land to lie fallow (*i.e.* uncultivated) one year in three in order to restore its goodness was universally followed instead of dressing it with manure; and, as there were no methods known of storing hay or preserving other growths as food for the animals, most of the stock was

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killed off in November and the meat salted down.

The distribution of the land was still on the old Saxon village plan: strips of arable field here, strips of pasture there, with the separate holdings marked by turfed paths, or balks. The narrowness of the holdings prevented the corn land from ever being ploughed across, hence it was not thoroughly turned; and the long distances at which some of the separate strips lay from the homestead caused great loss of time in carrying on farm-work. There were still but few enclosed fields, and animals when grazing needed continual 'herding'; geese and swine fed in the thick coppices and on the outskirts of the forests. We may imagine William Caxton's father as a well-to-do farmer, either owning his farm or holding it as tenant from some manor or monastery. If the latter, he might be bound to render certain services to his landlord in repairing roads or bridges, or in reaping the harvest, or in supplying materials and labourers for the upkeep of the manorial estate on certain days of the year. But he must himself have been in a fairly independent position and an employer of labourers, otherwise he could not have apprenticed his son William to the London cloth merchant Robert Large. This occurred when the youth was about seventeen years of age. Until then we may picture him learning the work of a farmer and taking his share, from the age of eight, in the family duties.

In the fifteenth century, and indeed for three centuries later, a household such as that of William Caxton's youth was self-sustaining. Not only was

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all the food consumed produced and prepared at home, with all the clothing, but nearly all the tools and implements used, and even the furniture and utensils. The flesh eaten was the meat, fresh or salted, of the animals killed on the farm ; the bread was made from the barley or rye, grown, reaped, threshed, and ground at home ; the fleeces and skins were cleaned and tanned, dressed and spun, and afterward made up into rough garments ; the simple bowls and platters, spoons and trenchers, were home-made ; so were harness and fittings for plough and wagons ; so also were the ' candles ' grudgingly used in the long winter, and the lanterns of horn which carried them. The principal drinks were beer and decoctions of herbs. The former was made without hops and lasted good only for about a fortnight, so that brewing as a household function needed to take place nearly as often as baking. The only itinerant traders whose wares supplied the needs of the rural home were the potter and the smith ; the heavy earthenware basins and goblets which were slowly replacing those of wood or horn were sold by the one and metal-ware by the other. The seller of earthenware was generally the potter himself, who made his stock in the winter half of the year and hawked it in the better weather. The smith not only dealt in hardware, but mended and sharpened the tools of the household—the ' tinker ' of modern times is his lineal descendant.

The one opportunity for intercourse with people not of the immediate neighbourhood was given by the annual fair. This yearly market, in which sales

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of all kinds of produce were possible, took place in the various trade centres at the festival of the patron saint of the parish, and might last for three or more days. In some places some particular kind of market might predominate—as sheep, or cattle, or wool, or cloth—but many were quite general, and gave to the rural population their one chance of what, in our own days, is summed up in the term ‘shopping.’ Naturally the occasion permitted holiday as well as business, since it was a complete interruption of the ordinary routine ; thus with large numbers of people congregated together there was scope for the wandering juggler and performer, the wonder-worker and medicine-man, and the troupes of animal-tamers and tricksters from which, in later days, the circus and travelling theatre were to develop. Though wheat was grown in Kent, and its soil, especially in the Isle of Thanet, was suitable for corn, it is probable that Caxton’s father found his flocks of sheep by far the most profitable of his possessions. The wool trade had been fostered and protected for centuries, and it was even more prosperous in the fifteenth century than in earlier times. The settlement of Flemish weavers in this country under King Edward III had led to a considerable increase in the trades of making and dyeing of cloth at home. Formerly it had been the custom, through the backwardness of our people in technical arts, to export the wool to Flanders and reimport the finished material. Indeed, at this time the reputation of English wool, unsurpassed by any on the Continent, was in a fair way to be equalled by that for sober-coloured, deep-tinted English cloth.



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A constant cross-Channel traffic was kept up between Dover and other Kentish ports and Calais. This last-named town was often, curiously enough, the seat of the staple, or recognized wool-market, instead of an English town, as there existed a dread of permitting alien merchants too great freedom in England.

William Caxton's father was, undoubtedly, something more than a substantial Kentish yeoman, and it is reasonable to suppose that his trade in fleeces put him easily into communication with the London merchant. Robert Large, like Gilbert Becket nearly three centuries before, became Lord Mayor of London, and his name has been handed down to fame through his connexion with a maker of history greater than himself. For the Kentish lad apprenticed to him was to accomplish in England one of the greatest achievements in our history.

We may imagine that William Caxton's father cared but little for the troublous politics of the time, and that, like all quiet traders and workers, he asked only that the Government should guard well the coasts and the narrow seas, so that pirates and privateers should not interfere with his ships. But also we may imagine that the members of the Caxton household were pleasantly aware that William was of about the same age as the young King. During little Henry's long minority his uncles, the Duke of Bedford in France and the Duke of Gloucester in England, sought to rule his double kingdom for him—to subdue completely the one half and to maintain in peace the other. It was hoped that the conquest of France,

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begun by his illustrious father, the 'Star of England,' would, with the help of the Duke of Burgundy, be complete before he was of age himself to rule. But the event was far otherwise. At the age of seven years he was crowned King of England at Westminster, and, two years later, at Paris, he was crowned King of France. When, in 1438, Caxton was apprenticed to the London merchant the young King Henry was beginning to try his prentice hand at ruling. At that date, too, it is interesting to notice, the imposing personality handed down to us as 'Warwick the King-maker' was a child of ten years of age, while Edward, Earl of March, afterward Duke of York and King Edward IV., was not born until four years later. Little could the Kentish lad have expected to be brought into actual contact with these great ones of the land, as afterward came about.

It is probable that young William Caxton enjoyed some privileges as a boy which served to form his taste and enabled him to use profitably the opportunities which came to him in London. Had he been an apprentice who could neither read nor write he would hardly in three years' time have been so high in his master's esteem as to be named in his will, and thus free to strike out a new line for himself. In the early fifteenth century there were some possibilities of education even for country lads. Nearly all monasteries and priories had a school attached in which boys were taught to read, to sing the offices of the Church, and, if they showed promise, to write and to study the Latin grammar. However busy William Caxton might be during the summer months on his

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father's land, there were the long weeks of winter when but little could be done on the farm, and the indoor pursuits of the nearest religious house were open to all who wished to learn. And all study that was pursued at that time was carried on within the walls of a monastery. Some of these institutions were famous for one branch of learning, some for another, but in all alike a knowledge of Scripture, of history, of medicine, and of farming was preserved. Every monastery, too, possessed some precious manuscripts, and most of them employed monks and clerks to make copies in beautiful, shapely script. We may well suppose that a lad like William Caxton early felt the charm of books and written characters, and that he watched with eagerness when, on rare occasions, the pupils of the priory were allowed to enter the quiet precincts of the scriptorium.

The homestead which sheltered him until he was seventeen, and after that knew him no more, may be pictured as a rather long, low building consisting of a central room or hall in which the whole public life of the family was lived—cooking, working, resting, meals, amusements, and sleep alike were carried on there. Above this was probably a roofed chamber, or solar, the private room of the heads of the household, and the storehouse of the family treasures. The outer walls were of wattle, with timber cross-beams; the roof, of thatch or red tiles, was supported at an acute slope by massive 'roof-trees,' visible from within, for ceilings were not yet common. The openings for light had no glass, but a painted frame-

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work formed some protection against the weather, and heavy sheepskins were hung across them in winter. A central hearth in the hall contained the fire, and around it was built a kind of enclosure, within which great warmth and cosiness prevailed. The smoke escaped by an opening in the roof, but hung lingeringly round the rafters before emerging into the open air. The floor was of earth, strewn with rushes for great occasions, and a low platform at one end marked the 'parlour' of the house. Upon it stood the table of the master and mistress, and, on a lower level, down the middle stretched the board on trestle supports at which sat all the farm servants for their daily meals. Round the house clustered sheds and byres; shelters for tools, provender for the animals and stores. An enclosure within a wattled hedge formed a 'garth,' or yard, where fowls and geese, swine, and the younglings of the flocks and herds gathered until driven afield.

The dress of the fifteenth-century yeoman was sternly simple, no extravagant town fashions penetrating to the seclusion of the Weald. Probably young Caxton wore a sheepskin tunic with a coarse linen shirt beneath, long hose from hip to toe, with wooden clogs to protect the feet. His father's dress would be very similar, though a tunic of heavy cloth might replace the undressed fleece. His mother's attire consisted of a short gown, very full on the hips and with half sleeves, with a coarse linen overall for wear in the house, and a long, substantial cloak for great occasions abroad. The head-dress, which was only rarely worn by country women, was a light cap with

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a hanging border, usually of the same material as the cloak, of which it was often the detached hood. Women of fashion, then as now, were noted for the inconvenience of their attire, as indeed were also the men.

## CHAPTER II: *The London Apprentice*

**W**HEN Caxton became apprentice to Robert Large, cloth merchant and alderman of the city of London, many lads of his age would be ready to envy him. For though the London of the fifteenth century may have been a small and curious town compared with the modern capital, it was finer and more imposing than any other city in the country, and had many interesting phases of life to behold. Tradition had even then woven romance and glory about it; if its streets were not 'paved with gold' in the countryman's imagination, at least they were full of exciting possibilities. It was in the year before Caxton's birth (about eighteen years before his first sight of London) that the famous Sir Richard Whittington had become Lord Mayor for the third time, and already the legends of his dream and his cat and of the many bells of the city had begun to be told. And indeed, apart from romance, there were many great and sober realities to strike the imagination. London was the seat of the king's court; at Westminster the Parliaments assembled; it was the great trading centre of the kingdom; its river was the highway of traffic for business as well as for pleasure; docks and wharves lined the shores within the city boundaries; the palaces of the nobles and the great ecclesiastics were more imposing than those in any other town except Florence; its cathedral and churches, with their lofty bell-towers and stately shrines, were of great note with travellers even from

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the Continent ; its bridge over the Thames was one of the most admired sights in Europe ; and its cleanliness and order had won for it the name ' the White City.'

We think of it now as having had narrow unpaved streets with no footways ; as being undrained and unlighted ; as having had houses with overhanging stories and only outside staircases ; few chimneys, and fewer windows ; with person and property unguarded and unsafe, so that walking in the streets after dark was forbidden by law, as leading to thefts and assaults. We think of it too as having been occupied by a rough and dirty population who knew nothing and cared nothing for what we now consider the essential comforts and conveniences of life. Heavy fortresses still guarded the principal ' gates ' of the city—Bishop's Gate, Ald Gate, and Lud Gate ; and, though they were let out to citizens instead of being manned by guards, they were a constant reminder of insecurity. Their gates were still shut at sunset, except the postern, which was opened after parley ; the heads of traitors and other political offenders were fixed on spears on each of these great entrances ; riots and street fights, attacks on Jews and foreigners, were of frequent occurrence, and when all men above the rank of burgher wore arms, public quarrels and duels were common. Yet to William Caxton, straight from the Weald of Kent, it must have seemed a very wonderful and magnificent place.

Probably his new home was in Cannon (Candelwick) Street, quite near St Paul's Cathedral, and, as was the custom for many centuries after his day, he lived

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with his fellow-apprentices in his master's house. He was the youngest of the seven youths entering thus upon the beginning of their merchant's career, and his apprenticeship was expected to last for seven years. At first his duties would be very simple, but during that time he would be expected to master all the details and many of the principles belonging to his trade—the packing and unpacking of goods; the handling and measuring of bales of cloth; the counting and weighing of fleeces; the distinguishing of addresses and trade-marks and guild-signs on the large labels; the understanding differences of texture, and of how to fold and wrap delicate fabrics, to preserve them in their rough transit from London to Antwerp or Bruges or Calais.

A busy life was led by the London apprentice of those days. Besides the actual work of the shop or market, he was required to wait on his master's family, to do any household labours or errands, especially the fetching of water from the conduits, and to assist in watching the few materials exposed in the outer booth open to the street. This structure served instead of the modern plate-glass window for the showing of wares, and the apprentices vied with each other during the daylight hours in their loud cries to the passers-by of, "What d'ye lack, sirs? What d'ye lack?"

Moreover, the London apprentice was a person of importance. His studies and recreations were alike regulated; he was required to attend church and to hear sermons, and to learn his catechism on Sundays and holy days; he was subject to public reproof,



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and penalties in the guild-meetings if he wasted his time or failed to become reasonably efficient in his work, and he could be publicly whipped for misconduct. In his leisure time and on Sundays and holy days, after divine service, he was required to attend at Smooth-fields (Smithfield) or Finsbury Fields for drill and archery practice, and was liable to be enrolled as a member of a kind of militia in the event of war or serious disturbance. He would then march under the command of the city aldermen and sheriffs and accompany the Lord Mayor in his capacity of chief magistrate to help to quell the disorder. He would join his fellows at every available opportunity for their favourite sport of football in the streets or cock-fighting in some sheltered corner, or for wrestling games and dancing on the open spaces where the 'poles' were reared at several spots within and without the city walls. Shrove Tuesday was the great privileged occasion of football; none of the authorities attempted on that day to interfere, nor would any burgher complain of having to close and barricade his shop. On the first of May, when the eagerly looked-for spring had really come, all the citizen-world went May-poling. A great shaft would be planted on the green of each of the many pleasant villages outside London, and within the city they would be reared at the junction of main roads and highways. The finest and tallest of these was in Cornhill; though that at St Mary-le-Strand rivalled it: it overtopped the spire of the church of St Andrew, which was called on that account St Andrew Undershaft.

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Cock-fighting went on all the year round, even schoolboys sharing in it and clubbing together to buy game-birds. The contests would be fought out in the great schoolroom and watched by the 'heads' on grand occasions, but as a rule they had to be carried on more or less surreptitiously. Then at Yuletide, for the period from Christmas to Candlemas, the 'mumming,' or dumb-show acting, and carol-singing and wassailing, formed amusement for whole groups of young people, who patrolled the streets, visited the houses of the nobles and the enclosures of the monasteries, and generous hospitality and some largesse were given in return for their performances.

From all accounts, the London apprentice of the fifteenth century had many of the characteristics of the town lads of to-day—a perpetual restlessness, a quick and ready interest in the doings of the street, a delight in anything startling or uncomfortable, and a turn for impudent repartee. We may imagine young Caxton easily adapting himself to the conditions of his new life, though at first puzzled and bewildered by the noise and the bustle of town compared with the quiet of the Kentish farm; wearing the long worsted hose and short fustian tunic of the time, a flat cloth cap on his head, and heavy wooden-soled low shoes on his feet. He would take his meals with his master's family, sitting with his companions at the lower end of the trestle-table, and, like them, keeping perfect silence until the meal was over. Those were the days before breakfast was a real 'sitting-down' meal. If he had the opportunity to break his fast before the dinner hour it would be by

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eating a piece of barley-bread as he went about his work. At eleven in winter, and twelve in summer, the dinner, or principal meal of the day, was taken ; it consisted of stewed meat or fish, cabbages or leeks, solid pasties of rabbit or pork, rye or barley-bread, and a horn of beer or ale. This was almost the only drink in common use. Clever housewives made wines from most English fruits, mead, and ' teas ' or decoctions of various herbs, but they were treasured for special occasions. Wealthy people drank French and Spanish wines, of which large quantities were imported, but in the household of the ordinary citizen there was a strong prejudice in favour of the home-brewed beer. Indeed, so highly was it thought of that some was exported, and great casks of it were sent as gifts to ambassadors and churchmen, merchants and officials, who had dealings with England.

Caxton's sleeping-place was probably a loft overhanging an archway into a little ' garth,' or yard, and perhaps one or two of the senior apprentices slept in the house proper, among the bales of cloth, as snugly as their successors in later generations slept ' under the counter.' Perhaps, indeed, Robert Large was one of the first merchants of London to introduce this substantial table into his warehouse for convenience in counting the money offered. But still, as three centuries earlier, there would be no glass in the window-opening, and, though an upper chamber, or solar, was becoming a feature of the newer London houses, there was as yet no inside staircase. A swinging sign, perhaps a picture of a hanging fleece, or a bale of cloth, made known the

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nature of his trade, and within doors a low, heavily raftered room served as workroom, warehouse, and sale-place for such customers as entered. But buyers generally stood outside. As a man abreast of the times and much concerned with foreign trade, Robert Large would possess several graduated slats of wood, with ells and yards and 'hands' marked thereon, as laid down by Act of Parliament.

In old London the various trades, and even the different parts of the same trade, were kept strictly distinct. If, as we suppose, Caxton's master was a merchant in a large way, with what we should call an export and import trade as well as retail, there would be among his bales and packages occasional furs and skins, dressed leathers and parchments, and even, perhaps, a precious manuscript or two. We may imagine the interest with which the young Kentish apprentice would take part in the unpacking of bales and bundles, and by degrees how he would learn to register the purchases and sales. The simplest and most usual form of early book-keeping was by means of 'tallies,' or slats of wood, notched alike on both ledges in certain frequently recurring numbers, as fives, tens, twelves, and twenties. One of these would be split lengthwise—one half included in the bale of goods, the other half hung in the warehouse. Or, if receiving a bale, a 'tally' would be found within, which served, as the modern invoice does, to check the quantity and retain as the bill. But for a permanent register the Roman numerals were employed, marked with a thick quill on parchment; and a final I was always turned into a J for

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ornament and finish. The Arabic figures, so familiar to us and, as we think, so inevitable, were then hardly known in England, and from the 'device of place' which distinguished them they were believed to have something of magic about them; their use was even considered impious.

The guild of cloth merchants was a leading and important one, though they were as yet known either as 'weavers' when they prepared the fabric, or 'shearmen' when they preserved it. The cloth of those days was heavily 'napped,' or covered with surface hair, and was renovated from time to time by shearing or clipping.

Once a year was held the great Cloth Fair of St Bartholomew on Smooth-fields, the prior of the monastery opening the fair and being entitled to certain dues and tolls which were always exacted by landowners from traders assembling for business. There, from all parts, would congregate merchants, foreign as well as English, though the former were required to leave London within forty days. Here and there in London were settled little colonies of Flemish weavers (one such was at Bermondsey), and they combined with their special trade that of the fullers, or dyers. These foreigners seem to have shared in the ordinary rights and duties of citizens, though we may suppose that they had some little roughness to put up with at first from their insular-minded neighbours, and especially from the London 'prentices. It is always a matter of much amusement to the illiterate that a foreigner speaks English with difficulty, and the favourite fifteenth-century test was

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to require a Fleming to say "Bread and cheese" when shown those articles of food. He was inevitably betrayed by saying "*Käse und Brod.*"

It may have been during Caxton's first year of apprenticeship that his master, Robert Large, became Lord Mayor. If so, we may imagine how proudly his apprentices would carry themselves during his year of office, and how they would have a prominent part in each pageant of the time. For the yearly 'show' on November 9th which still commemorates the importance of the old City companies (or guilds) is but an unworthy representative of the ancient processions. After the civic election in the great raftered chamber of the Guildhall there was wont to be in the adjoining Chapel of St Faith a service which was attended by all the officials of the city. A new chapel, beautifully appointed and decorated, had been built a few years before Robert Large's mayoralty. Then followed the procession to Westminster Palace for the newly elected mayor to offer his fealty to the sovereign. The procession in Caxton's day was through the streets, and chiefly on horseback, though some few years later it went in barges on the river. Accompanying the Lord Mayor were his principal dignitaries and officials—the City Remembrancer, the Chamberlain, the Huntsman (for London was surrounded with chases, and hunting was a favourite sport), the Sword-bearer, and the Mace-bearer. Banners and ensigns made gay the passage of the procession, beautifully embroidered figures of the patron saints of the city churches and emblazoned designs of the city arms succeeding each other at

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intervals. The arms, appearing also on the Common Seal, were the Cross of St George with the Sword of St Paul in one quarter ; on the other side of the seal in Caxton's day was a representation of St Paul and St Thomas of Canterbury. The guilds of the city followed on foot, bearing their symbols and banners, and foremost would be the one to which the new Lord Mayor belonged.

At the Whitsuntide holiday it was the custom for the men of the various guilds to perform mystery plays and moralities in the open spaces of the towns. They carried with them beams and poles and erected a high platform as a stage. The cities of York and Coventry have the most famous records of such performances, but we may be sure that London was in no way behind in activity. The plays gave splendid opportunities to ambitious apprentices ; for not only were their services needed for the moving and placing of stage and properties, but one of them might be entrusted with a minor part in the acting itself.

It was during the year of Large's mayoralty, or the following year, that Caxton probably witnessed one of the striking and painful sights in which town life in mediæval times abounded. It was an outcome of the bitter political quarrels of the time, in which the Council of Regency for the young King were the principal actors. During King Henry's childhood, while the Duke of Bedford was representing him in France, his authority here was divided between the Beaufort brothers and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, afterward Cardinal, strove to establish and maintain

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peace between England and France ; Duke Humphrey chose to place himself at the head of a war-party. Then, as since, there were to be found plenty of people to shout truculently for war without thinking to count the cost carefully and pay for it honourably. All such, and many others, admired the recklessness and the bluff, open daring of the Duke of Gloucester, and he was so far a popular favourite that his name has been handed down as ' the Good Duke Humphrey.'

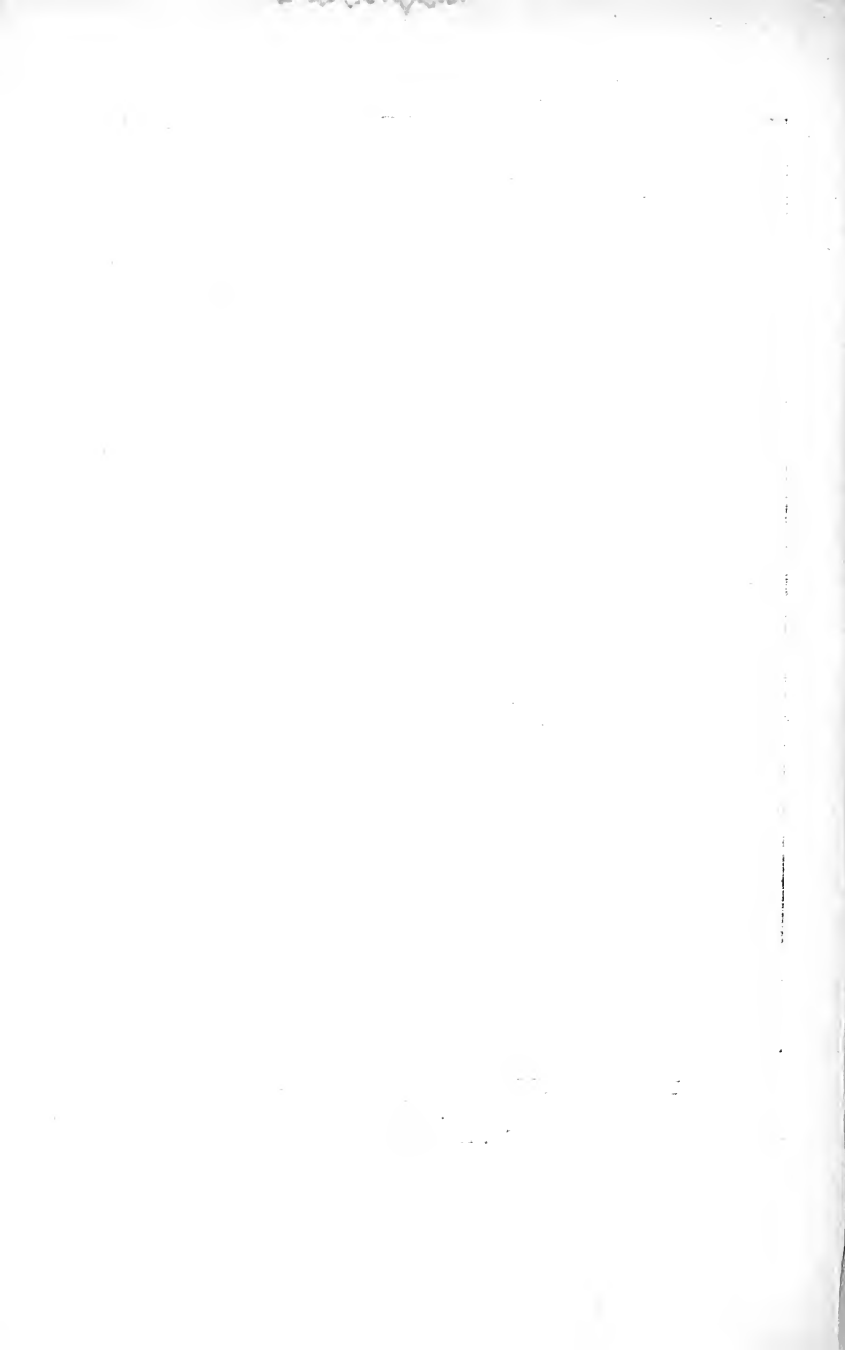
Humphrey had mischievously overthrown the careful Beaufort plans, and when the opportunity came for retaliation the Duchess of Gloucester was accused of ' practising harm ' against the young King by means of incantations and spells of witchcraft. She was refused sanctuary in Westminster Abbey, imprisoned in the Tower, and rigorously examined till she gave up the names of certain wizards and necromancers who had instructed her. These men were condemned to death, and the Duchess was sentenced to perform public penance by walking through London streets robed in a white sheet bearing a scarlet ' S ' (*i.e.* Sorceress) on front and back, on three successive days. Her journey was probably from the Tower to St Paul's Cross, outside the Cathedral, where an address or sermon would be preached condemning her crime.

Public punishments were so much in vogue that this episode would attract less attention and arouse less horror than in later times. Tradesmen who cheated, vagrants who attempted theft, roysterers who made disturbances after nightfall, were wont to





The Duchess of Gloucester refused Sanctuary in  
Westminster Abbey  
W. Hatherell



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be whipped through the streets, or fixed in the stocks or the pillory (every parish possessed these penal instruments), while the rough men and lads made sport of their discomfort or pelted them with refuse.

It does not follow that any widespread feeling was aroused in London on account of this punishment of the wife of a popular favourite. The Duke of Gloucester was so universally known as eccentric that when he married one of the ladies-in-waiting of his former wife, the Princess Jacqueline of Hainault, no one was greatly interested or disturbed. Similarly her downfall stirred but little regret. The 'Good Duke' retired into private life for a time, and presently the trouble and disgrace were forgotten.

On the greater holy days there would be time for workers and apprentices to go farther afield and, leaving the city, explore the quaint villages near: on the east, Epping on the borders of its famous forest; on the northern hills, Hampstead through the High Gate; westward, the village of Old Bourne, where was the palace of the Bishops of Ely; southward, the pretty little hamlet of Charing, with its beautiful cross erected to the memory of Edward I's *chère reine* Eleanor. Without going so far there were, besides, quiet spots round the wells, famous of old time for the curative properties of their waters—Holy Well, Clerken Well, St Clement's Well, and Bagnigge Wells, all favourite haunts of Londoners. There was also the menagerie at the Tower, for ever since the days of Henry I, whose menagerie at Woodstock was the private delight of the monarch, and the resort of men of science, there had been a collection

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of wild animals at the Tower to which the public was admitted. The name of the Lion Tower commemorates to this day the home of the king's leopards and their keepers.

From some of the City records we learn that Robert Large, during his year of office, had an official residence, apart from his private home, at what was in later days known as the Windmill, in Old Jewry. This house had originally been a synagogue, but when the Jews were expelled from London (as happened occasionally) it had been granted to a minor order of friars. During the fifteenth century it was granted on more than one occasion to the Lord Mayor as his civic mansion. In later years it became a tavern. Probably this house had windows of oiled linen and a chimney, with a solar above the great hall, and a kitchen shut off with a partition.

There remain to us some old inventories which give an idea of the comparatively little furniture and few possessions which even well-to-do citizens had. One such contains: "Two mattresses, 8 blankets and 1 serge, 8 linen sheets, two feather beds, 3 brass pots, 1 candlestick, 2 andirons, 1 tripod, 1 washing vessel, one frying-pan, 1 canvas bag, 2 pillows, 2 coffers, 6 chests, 1 counter, 1 table, 2 stools, 2 chairs, 1 cupboard, 2 tubs, 6 silver spoons, 1 flagon." For many years yet people spent their money on fine clothes rather than on furniture and decorations of the house; and if we wonder how they stored and took care of their wardrobes we may remember that most of it was in wear all the time. For houses were cold, draughty

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and badly-built, so that as many clothes were worn indoors as out. We may note, too, how our familiar piece of furniture came by its name of 'chest of drawers.' The slow development of the chest into a box with partitions, and presently partitions which would draw out instead of being lifted, explains the cumbrous title.

Of changes of clothes or private possessions a young apprentice would have few, and Caxton would be no exception to the rule. A short knife attached to his belt for use in his work and at table, a second tunic with leather trimmings, an embossed leather strap with metal buckles, and perhaps a woollen rug like a Scottish plaid for night or especially cold weather would complete his list of treasures. A curt little note in a record of a trial for manslaughter of a young student who killed his opponent in a wrestling bout would appropriately describe the youth of Caxton's day: "He has no chattels." Hence none could be confiscated. Nor had he cause for anxiety as to being robbed—which was an ever-present dread to his substantial elders. For not only the perils of the streets, but also the perils of the house were many. Walls were unsubstantial, only a few being of brick or stone; the lower part was of shingle and mud, the upper of timber; and it was not therefore difficult for the resolute 'housebreaker' to make a hole through the wall and through it drag his booty.

A marked improvement was beginning to take place in the methods of building at the close of Caxton's time in London, the making of bricks having

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become an established industry for the first time since Roman days.

Instead of the seven years which was his appointed time, the young lad found himself free in something over three. His master fell ill and died in the second year after his mayoralty; and so well had his Kentish apprentice pleased him that he bequeathed him a legacy of twenty marks and cancelled his indentures of service. Caxton's mind was soon made up as to what to do. No longer would he stand at the junction of Candlewick Street and Cheapside crying, "What d'ye lack, sirs?" He would go abroad and see the foreign lands of which he had often thought as the great bales arrived from Antwerp or Bruges. And as he belonged to the fraternity of the Weavers or the Shearers (afterward to become the honourable guild of Cloth-workers), there were those who could advance his wishes and put him in the way of a more independent life. This next phase must be described in another chapter.

## CHAPTER III: *Caxton at Bruges*

WILLIAM CAXTON, junior apprentice, was not the only recipient of the bounty of the kindly Robert Large, ex-Lord Mayor of London. He left to his parish church of St Olave, where he was buried, two hundred pounds; to St Margaret's, Lothbury, twenty-five pounds; to the poor, twenty pounds; to the maintenance of London Bridge, one hundred marks; to the covering in of the Wall brook (a nuisance in rainy seasons), two hundred marks; to dowries for poor girls of his parish, one hundred marks; to poor householders, one hundred pounds. The mark appears to have been worth 13s. 4d., and thus Caxton's modest fortune was about thirteen pounds (worth now about £150).

Picture him now a staid and upstanding youth of about twenty, fair haired, close cropped, with blue shining eyes, and clad in the sober garb of the young Londoner of the day. The warden and elders of the guild have used their influence and have recommended him to the officials of the corresponding guild in Bruges, and thither he is starting on a June morning about two months after his master's death. His journey would be made on one of the freight boats which carried cargoes from the London wharves to the Flemish ports, and would take some weeks to accomplish. Indeed, in stormy weather the mere crossing from Sandwich to Boulogne often took a fortnight, the small, ill-equipped vessels being tossed about in the Channel, unable to get near the shore. For those

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were the days when there were no harbours beyond those formed here and there by the fortunate configuration of the land. The towns of Belgium which stood on the splendid rivers of that country held a position of great importance in the commerce of the Middle Ages. Where a waterway did not exist the enterprise of the people supplied one, and only France exceeded Belgium in the number of its canals. Bruges, in Caxton's time the principal town of West Flanders, is said to have gained its name from the many bridges over the canals which carried its trading vessels to and from the city. With Bremen and Lübeck, Bruges formed the third great town of the famous Hanseatic League ; and though in the passing of centuries it is now a quiet old-world city, in the fifteenth century it rivalled Hamburg itself. Its tapestry and cloths were of European fame, and its guild of cloth-workers was a very important corporation. Their hall and bell-tower were till lately one of the sights of the ancient city ; and when Caxton first visited Bruges he would find it in some ways more stately and impressive than London itself.

In those days the map of Europe showed several very different boundaries of countries from that of modern times. The Duchy of Burgundy, of which Dijon was the old capital, was an almost independent fief of the king of France. Our English history of the time is full of suggestive references to the power and importance of its reigning dukes, and to our alternate alliances and disputes with them. The counts of Flanders were equally powerful, and, until their dominions were absorbed by France or Belgium,



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they were alternately friendly or troublesome neighbours both to Germany and France. Their dominions were on the borders of these two rival nations, and the wealth and importance of the great towns enabled the counts to face sovereigns of greater but less developed countries with impunity. Antwerp, on the Scheldt, was one of the greatest seaports and one of the strongest fortresses in Europe ; it still remains a city of commercial importance. Ghent, from which town one of the sons of King Edward III took his title, was almost equally great. It is not an island town, but a town of islands, standing on more than twenty detached islets connected by bridges. In those days Tournai was greater than Brussels, though their positions have long since been reversed ; and Liège, with its iron-working industry, is comparatively modern.

If, as we suppose, Caxton during his time at Bruges held a position as agent for the London guilds, he had indeed an unusual and splendid opportunity for exercising his good sense and business judgment, For though trade will go on even in spite of political strife and arbitrary regulations, it is hampered and hindered by them, and the relations between England and Burgundy were such as to lead to restrictions.

Only a short time before Flanders and Burgundy had become united under the Duke of the latter province, and discord with him, our some-time ally, was one result of the English attempt to maintain a position in France.

Five years after Caxton's departure from London, King Henry, then aged twenty-five, was married to

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the Princess Margaret of Anjou, the niece of the French King. This did not prevent that sovereign from seizing the province of Maine and invading Normandy. The English armies were driven out, and by 1450 only a part of the province of Guienne and the port of Calais remained of the young King's great French inheritance. Two years later Guienne was lost, and thus the little son born to King Henry and Queen Margaret was heir to the English crown and —Calais. But for three centuries yet his successors were to claim the empty title of King of France.

When Caxton first settled in Bruges, Duke Philip the Good was ruler of Burgundy and Flanders, and faithfully sought to govern his dominions well. Six years before he had renounced the English claims, but it is very possible that he ignored the trade barrier set up by England for the sake of fostering the trade and merchandise of the cities in his duchy. The English Government had forbidden the carrying of English goods to any foreign port save Calais, thus seriously damaging the Flemish weaving industry and no less disastrously affecting the prosperity of English wool-growers. It is supposed that through the good offices of the trade guilds in each country the evil effects of this statute were mitigated and some freedom of trade was established.

The years from 1452 to 1461 were full of trouble and disturbance in England. The King fell a victim to an attack of acute melancholia, or insanity; an insurrection under a popular leader, Jack Cade, expressed the popular indignation with the Government; Richard, Duke of York, claimed to be next heir to

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the throne and was supported by a powerful body of nobles. He was appointed Protector during the King's illness, but in two years' time Henry was so far recovered as again to be able to reign. Soon open strife began between the supporters of the Lancastrian line and those of the Duke of York, and the Wars of the Roses kept the country in turmoil.

Strangely enough, the principal actors in this contest were the principal sufferers. There were few sieges, towns wisely yielded when threatened, and, as far as possible, pursued their way of trade under the new allegiance. But the great nobles, their supporters and their retainers fought savagely and relentlessly, through the long apprenticeship (it is suggested) of the war in France. With all the bitterness of a family quarrel it was persisted in until the combatants were both reduced to powerlessness. The peace-loving King, with his occasionally-returning malady, was but a source of weakness; while his Queen, Margaret of Anjou, had all the courage and resolution of a long line of warlike ancestors, but never could she rely on supporters at a critical moment, nor bring herself to waive revenge and thus achieve a surer victory. The great Earl of Warwick, the 'Last of the Barons,' set a shameless example of inconstancy; the Duke of York was slain on the field, handing on to his son Edward, a youth of about nineteen, the claim to the throne. In 1461 Edward was proclaimed king, as Edward IV, by the victorious party; and King Henry, the Queen, and the boy prince fled to Scotland and afterward to France.

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Three years later King Edward, yielding to the representations of the London merchants, sought to relax the restrictions on trade with Burgundy and Flanders, and he approached the Good Duke Philip with that intent. This perhaps he did the more readily since France was disposed to support the Lancastrians, and hence it seemed politic to have Burgundian influence on the side of York. Tradition has it that the Englishman, Caxton, now Rector of the *Domus Anglorum*, or House of the English Merchants, was chosen as envoy to carry the commission from the King of England.

A feature of the trading settlements of foreigners during the Middle Ages was their invariable custom of living in a little community, or colony, apart from the townsfolk of the place. So it was when Flemings settled in Norwich, Germans in London, or English in Bruges. We see the same characteristic in the East India Company's factories and forts in India three centuries later. The English House at Bruges was a handsome structure, with a chapel attached, as became the dwelling of the merchants whose national commodity, wool, was claimed 'to keep the whole world warm.' The regulations under which the little community lived were strict and almost conventual; the gates were closed at sunset and strangers were admitted only to interview the Rector. The Rector of the English House at Bruges was superior officer, so to speak, of the similar but less important houses at Antwerp and Ghent.

Caxton seems to have arranged successfully with the Duke a treaty by which the commerce between

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England and Burgundy, interrupted by political quarrels during the past twenty years, was to be resumed freely ; besides Calais, a Flemish port was to be made an English 'staple,' and all men were forbidden to interfere with peaceful merchants of either country in carrying on their trade.

At this time Caxton was a man of about forty-three, well versed in business, accustomed to responsibility, a thinker, and a man of the world. In his travels about 'the countries of Brabant, Flanders, Holland, and Zealand' on the business of the English woollen staple, he would come into contact with men of all degrees, and be made acquainted with many devices in customs and trade ; in all, we may be sure, he found interest.

A favourite pursuit of the great in those days was card-playing, and it had been one of the artistic industries of the noble city of Venice to paint the figures on the slips of cardboard. During the fifteenth century some enterprising German towns were employing, instead, the quicker method of using wooden blocks and 'emprinting' the designs, and the Venetian artists, in the interests of their trade, asked that restrictions should be placed upon the use of 'emprinted' cards. Probably each country had its own industry devoted to supplying these 'toys,' for we find that in the same year as that of the favourable treaty with Burgundy a statute of Edward IV forbade the importation of playing-cards into England.

Besides playing-cards, devotional pictures for the decoration of service-books and missals were also produced by means of the wooden blocks. It is

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possible, too, that the curious symbols which served as merchants' and guild marks were similarly produced, and, if so, there was, of course, every reason why Caxton should have been interested in the clever labour-saving device. The oldest wood-block print known to us is dated 1423, two years after Caxton's birth, and represents St Christopher bearing the infant Christ. But at the time when Caxton was living in the Low Countries these prints were very generally seen, and they were also used as illustrations to Scripture texts. These appeared in books of a few pages, each page having a picture and a few words of story, the whole being known as a Block Book. But it still remained to be discovered how to cut out separate letters in such a way that their *impression* should give the right appearance on paper. The earliest step was the carving of separate words, such as titles of the pictures, or separate texts. One of the most persistent and patient of the workers bent on mastering this was John Gutenberg at Mentz ; another was Peter Costar at Haarlem. We can never know the exact share of each of these and several others in the various improvements, but it is generally agreed that Gutenberg first succeeded in cutting out separate words in the wooden block and thus printing a page at a time. The next step was to have the single letters, so that they could be used again and again, and, when this was accomplished, to have them of metal instead of wood, so that they could be cast in a die instead of being carved separately. But (as anyone knows who has tried to read 'looking-glass writing ') the die must be of the shape to

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contain the letter, and the letter itself is the inversion of the impression it makes. So for many years the patient 'emprinters' worked on, improving here and there, until at last some one discovered how to cut the die, or *matrix* as it is called. The new method of writing was not, however, at once a rival to the old *manuscript* method.

It was at first looked upon as a curiosity, and though the letters were of the same shape as those of hand-writing, they were more mechanically regular and thus seemed lacking in the finish and individual character of the written ones. Also the evenness which we to-day connect with printed type could not be attained while the cutting of the dies had to be done by hand and with imperfect tools; there was no way of spreading the ink quite smoothly over the type, nor of pressing the paper upon the inked letters so that the contact was exactly level. By degrees, however, one improvement succeeding another, the Mentz 'emprinters,' with splendid enthusiasm, embarked on the great task of producing the whole Bible by the new method. One of the twenty copies then made was discovered in the library of Cardinal Mazarin, and it is hence often known as the Mazarin Bible. It is supposed to have been printed in the year 1456.

In 1467 the Good Duke Philip of Burgundy died, and was succeeded by his son Charles, popularly known, through the mediæval fondness for nick-names, as Charles the Rash, or Charles the Bold. At his father's court many Lancastrian exiles had found refuge, as the Duchess was connected with

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the English royal house. The chronicler, Philippe de Comines, describes the unhappy condition of some of these political refugees. "Some of them were reduced to such extremes of want and poverty before the Duke of Burgundy received them that no common beggar could have been in greater. I saw one of them who was Duke of Exeter (but he concealed his name) following the Duke of Burgundy's train barefoot and bare-legged, begging his bread from door to door. . . . There were also some of the families of the Somersets." Yet, within a year of his accession, we find the young Duke marrying the Lady Margaret, sister of the English King Edward IV. The marriage ceremony took place at Bruges, and the busy, luxurious city gave itself up to a series of magnificent entertainments and public rejoicings in honour of the event. In these William Caxton was probably a person of some importance. He was of the same nation as the bride; he held a position of public trust as representative of the most influential merchants' guild; and, moreover, his acquaintance with many cities and many interests would win for him esteem and respect.

As in mediæval Florence, the towered mansions of the Flemish nobles stood side by side with the fine houses of the burghers, and the curious modern affectation of scorning trade and commerce had not yet been adopted, even in England; in the Flemish towns, as in the Italian cities, the best resources of art were devoted to the decoration of the churches, public buildings, and private houses. So that it was through the streets of no mean city that there



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paced the bridal procession of the English Princess and her soldier-husband. A certain John Paston, an Esquire of Norfolk, who came in her train, thus describes his impressions of the occasion: "As for the duke's court, as for lords, ladies and gentlewomen, knights, esquires and gentlemen, I never heard of none like to it save King Arthur's Court." The Duke was a ruler of such importance in Europe that nearly every court had sent its ambassador on this occasion. The representative of the King of France was the Lord High Constable, and, greatly as his presence was desired by the Duke as conferring honour on his nuptials, the manner of his coming struck a jarring note. He elected to arrive with great state and a long procession of nobles, gentlemen-at-arms and knights; with trumpets and banners and all the panoply of grandeur, and also a disproportionate number of armed followers, whose swords and accoutrements clanked threateningly through the crowded streets. Moreover, he had carried before him a drawn sword, as emblem of feudal sovereignty. This so incensed the Duke that he refused to receive the Constable, and the festivity was therefore held with an omen of coming strife in every one's mind. Still another unhappy circumstance marred the joyful preparations. A quarrel took place between one of the Duke's retainers and a young noble in the train of a visiting ambassador. It was about a quite trifling matter—merely a stroke in a game of tennis—but the angry player against whom the decision went drew his sword and struck his opponent so violently that he died. The murderer was arrested and cast

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into one of the Duke's prisons, and in spite of all pleas for mercy the Duke ordered him to be executed on the very morning before he himself rode forth to meet his bride. The relatives of the young knight, some of whom were men of position and influence, vowed vengeance against the ruler who thus sternly punished an offence which was often expiated by a fine.

Such turbulent scenes were continually occurring in those times, and Caxton must often have witnessed disputes and conflicts as he pursued his ordinary life. We do not know exactly what position he held at this time, but it is supposed that ever since he had been commissioned, in 1464, to help to arrange the treaty of commerce between Edward IV of England and Duke Philip the Good, he had been in some position of trust at the ducal court. Perhaps he was a controller of estates or warden of ports, but it is almost certain that he was in the train of the Duke as he went from Bruges to Ecluse to receive the Princess Margaret when she arrived. We can fancy that the royal lady would feel a kindly interest in the Englishman, perhaps the only person in her new home, besides her own attendants, who could speak her own language. It is possible, too, that she found in him a taste similar to her own : a love of books and delight in songs and stories. However this may have been, from the coming of the English Princess, Caxton seems to have ceased to travel about from town to town negotiating with the merchant guilds, and to have lived on one or other of the estates of the Duchess, employed chiefly as steward or secretary.

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In that capacity he had considerable leisure, which (like all intelligent people) he proceeded to fill up. Among the possessions of the Duke and Duchess were, if not a library, at least several books, beautifully written and illuminated within, and massively and handsomely bound without. For the great were accustomed to receive as delicate gifts, from scholars and churchmen, fine manuscript copies of some favourite books. In the days when furniture was scarce and the little personal possessions that fill our modern rooms were unknown, there might often be found in a great carved chest in the lady's bower, or in a press in the wall, some few treasures in the way of books or musical instruments. Very often the owners could hardly read the books or play the instruments, but sometimes they could do both ; and apparently the Duchess Margaret was an accomplished and educated woman.

The ' Good Duke Humphrey ' was, strange to say, a book-lover. When, during the French wars, the English army looted Paris, the Duke of Gloucester was in command, and he took, as his share of the spoil, many precious manuscript-books from the library of the French king in the Louvre. Some years later (1440-1446) he gave several of these to the University of Oxford, thus laying the foundation of what was afterward to become the Bodleian Library, and one of the three greatest collections of books in our country. The central inner enclosure of the Bodleian, as we see it to-day, was the original ' Duke Humphrey's Library,' built to accommodate scholars wishing to study the precious volumes. We read

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that the building of the Library, which was put in hand soon after Duke Humphrey's death in 1447, was delayed considerably by the King (Edward IV) withdrawing the masons in order to build St George's Chapel at Windsor.

It is interesting to notice the names of some of the books given or bequeathed by the Duke : the works of Ovid, Cato, Cicero in the Latin ; Aristotle and Plato in Greek ; commentaries by Bede and Vincent de Beauvais ; some medical treatises ; some volumes of the Italian novelist Boccaccio ; the sonnets of Petrarch and the Divine Comedy of Dante. Like Caxton, he had always cared ' to study in books of antiquity,' although from the bustling turbulence of his life, and the rash and unthinking conduct of which he was capable, we should not have expected it of him. None of these books which he had possessed and enjoyed was among those which afterward became connected with Caxton's name.

## CHAPTER IV: *Caxton, Secretary and Student*

WE may think of Caxton during the next three or four years as living an entirely happy and congenial life in one or other of the Duke of Burgundy's castles, conducting the necessary correspondence for his patrons in the management of their estates, and devoting himself with keenness and energy to the task of reading and translating some of the favourite old-world stories. Duke Charles, as was the fashion with rulers of those times, was much engaged with adventurous and war-like pursuits, of quarrels and reprisals, of marches and attacks. His father had devoted the whole of a long life to the great endeavour of protecting his duchy and fostering in it the arts of peace; Charles the Bold took a very different line. His hot and-haughty temper, impatient pride and truculent spirit led him to be ever ready to fight, to be easily provoked, and with great readiness to give provocation.

In his many expeditions his Duchess could not accompany him, so that we may picture her as living the ordinary life of the great ladies of the day in some vast, frowning castle. It would not be very unlike her early life in England. Her meals would be taken at the High Table on the days in the great hall; she would receive any honoured guest or traveller of note, and listen to the songs or romances of the wandering minstrels. Her private life would be spent, for the most part, in her bower, an upper

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chamber with high, narrow windows shielded by lattice-work, from which might be seen the fair, stretching country of Burgundy. There she would receive her bailiffs and secretaries (for we have reason to believe that she was a good woman of business), her falconers and huntsmen, and there she would sit, surrounded by her ladies and attendants, at a tambour-frame plying her busy needle in making great canvas pictures of hunting and pastoral scenes.

It must not, however, be supposed that she lived an entirely quiet or indoor life. Hunting and hawking, with well-trained hounds and falcons, was a great resource with mediæval ladies. Much of the land of Burgundy was forest or marsh, carefully reserved, as in England, for the use of the dukes and their retinues in sport. We may picture Caxton as occupying a privileged position in her household; he appears to have had control of certain of the revenues of the Duchy and access to all its written treasures. Among these were copies of the favourite romances: *Hector of Troy*, *The Romance of Alexander*, *Renard the Fox*, *King Arthur and his Knights*, *Charlemagne and Roland*, and various fragments of historical records, such as *Chronicles of England*, *Description of Britagne*, and *Feats of Arms and Chivalry*. Most of these were written in Old French, the true language of romance, and not far removed from the Burgundian French which was spoken at the time.

Here was opportunity for Caxton to develop his secret taste for reading, and he tells us a little about

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his pursuits and his companions and friends in Burgundy. "Oft was I excited of the venerable man Messire Henry Bolomyer, Canon of Lausanne, for to reduce for his pleasure some historie, as well in Latin and in romance as in other fashion written ; that is to say of the right, puissant, virtuous, and noble Charles the Great, King of France and Emperor of Rome, son of the great Pepin, and of his princes and barons, as Rowland, Oliver and other." These 'reductions' were perhaps translations, perhaps abridgments, of the old stories, which were wont to run to thousands of lines ; all later generations of Englishmen, therefore, are indirectly indebted to the worthy Messire Henry Bolomyer, Canon of Lausanne, for setting Caxton to the task of translation and abridgment. For had it not been for his interest and desire to reproduce the old stories in a modern version, his attention might not have been so thoroughly engrossed by the new invention of Emprinting. That at first he saw no connexion between the picture-cuts, trade-mark-stamping, and entire books no longer hand-written is certain.

In his interesting task he found such difficulties as daunted him—an experience pardonable enough since he was certainly working without good dictionaries, and, as he modestly avows, with very imperfect knowledge of both the French and his own English tongue. "When all these things came before me," he writes, "after that I had made and written five or six quires, I fell in despair of this work, and purposed no more to have continued therein, and the

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quires laid apart, and in two years after laboured no more at this work, and was fully in will to have left it." Naturally the vocabulary of trade and intercourse with merchants would contain but few terms specially suited to stories of fighting and adventure. Perhaps his overcast air, perhaps his modest complaint to his mistress when discussing some business matter, revealed to the kindly Duchess her secretary's disappointment. He continues: "Till on a time it fortuneth that the right high, excellent, and right virtuous princess, my right redoubted lady, my Lady Margaret, sent for me to speak with her good grace of divers matters, among the which I let her Highness have knowledge of the beginning of this work; which anon commanded me to show the said five or six quires to her said grace. And when she had seen them anon she found default in mine English, which she commanded me to amend, and moreover commanded me straightly to continue and make end of the residue not translated."

It is noticeable how completely Caxton has adopted the courtly style of speech about his august mistress; and the almost extravagantly chivalrous terms in which he speaks of her and her condescension show us too the gentler side of fifteenth-century civilization—the element of respect and reverence for women. Caxton's narrative continues: "Whose dreadful commandment I durst in no wise disobey, because I am a servant unto her said grace and receive of her yearly fee, and other many good and great benefits; but forthwith went and laboured in the said trans-



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lation after my simple and poor cunning, all so nigh as I can, following mine author, meekly beseeching the bounteous highness of my said lady that of her benevolence list to accept and take in gree (kindly) this simple and rude work."

Thus we find Caxton one of the long line of writers who owed their advancement, at first at least, to the kindly interest of great patrons. Until quite modern times it was, indeed, almost the only way of producing literary work, and the mechanical side—the writing or the printing, as it came to be—was for a long time yet still a part of the author's or the translator's concern. A previous resident in the Burgundian ducal household had translated the old *Tales of Troy* into French, and his copy was undoubtedly one of the manuscript books among which Caxton revelled in his quiet turret chamber. This translator was Messire Raoul de Fevre, chaplain to Duke Philip the Good, and he may have been still alive in Caxton's early years in the Duchess Margaret's service.

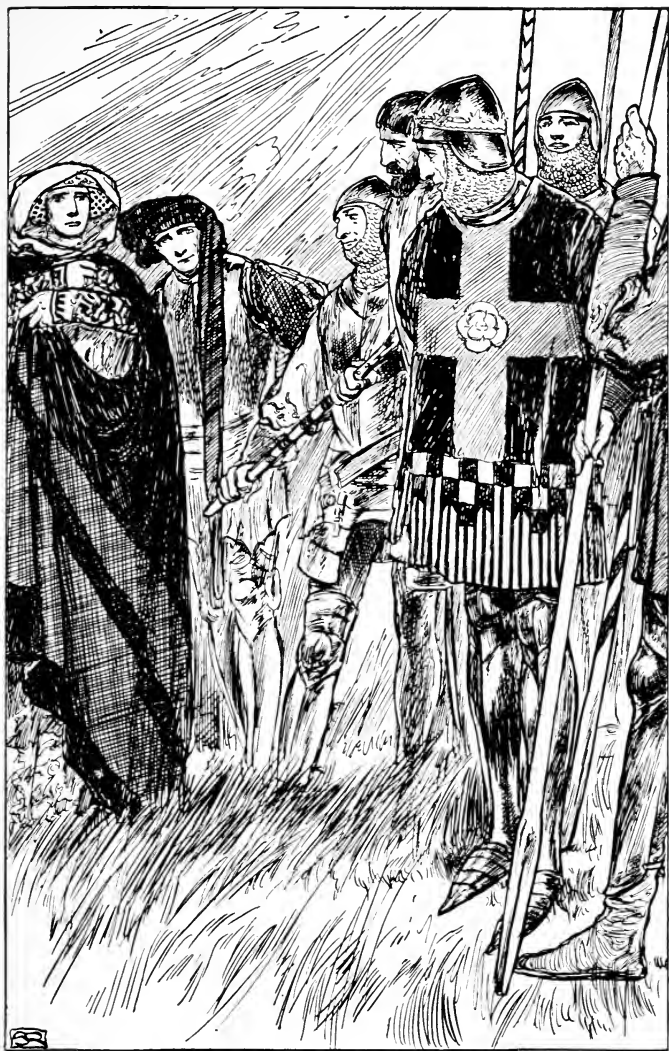
Meanwhile in England the peace which followed Edward of York's victory lasted but a short time and was rudely broken. Warwick, the most powerful of the new King's supporters, who had great estates all over England and whose fortress-mansion in London is still commemorated in Warwick Lane, became discontented with the rewards and consideration he received from Edward. He was especially offended at the King's refusal to sanction the marriage of the Duke of Clarence with Warwick's daughter. He therefore began to plot with the King of France,

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Louis XI, and secretly had the forbidden marriage accomplished. He also visited Duke Charles of Burgundy, but failed to win his support for the plan. Louis, however, was quite willing to help the Lancastrians back to power, since Edward of York had chosen to ally himself with Burgundy, and he arranged a meeting between the Earl of Warwick and the exiled Queen Margaret. The Queen accepted his offer of service, and a marriage was arranged between the young Prince of Wales and Warwick's second daughter, Anne. Then the Earl returned to England, gathered his forces, enticed King Edward from London to subdue an insurrection in the North, and then marched to London and proclaimed Henry VI a restored king.

It was then Edward's turn to flee. In the latter part of the year 1470 he appeared at his sister's court in Bruges as a refugee from England, while his Queen sought sanctuary in Westminster Abbey, and there the heir to the throne was born during his father's exile. This was barely three years after the gay wedding of Duke Charles the Bold and the Yorkist princess. Revolutions were so frequent in the many small, turbulent States on the Continent that possibly the King's sojourn at the Burgundian court aroused but little interest except in the high quarters of political intrigue. Louis of France would be annoyed, of course, but the Duke of Burgundy was too powerful and important a ruler at present to be crushed for espousing the opposite side in a neighbour's quarrel.

Edward's stay in exile was short, for in less than



Queen Margaret taken Prisoner after Tewkesbury  
Stephen Reid



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six months he had made a bold dash for England, landed far in the north and won adherents (like Bolingbroke in Richard II's day) by protesting that he had come back to claim his York estates. Of two things we may be sure—that while in Flanders and Burgundy he won golden opinions for his gracious and manly bearing, and that he saw and spoke with his fellow-countryman, William Caxton. Hence there would be a thrill of interest in Burgundian court circles when in the following May came the news that, after the battle of Barnet and the battle of Tewkesbury (in one of which the powerful Warwick was killed and in the other the young Prince Edward and Queen Margaret taken prisoner) Edward of York was again King of England. He sent a gracious letter of thanks to the nobles, the mayor, and the burghers of Bruges for their kindly welcome in his exile. The palace where he stayed is now one of the Museums of the city, but the raftered hall where he was entertained, the kitchen with its mighty open fire-place where the banquets were prepared, even the little apothecaries' room where the Duchess Margaret's 'leech' prepared the medicines and unguents for the ducal household may still be seen. A few pieces of armour and some ancient solid furniture may have been seen by the exiled ancestor of our present sovereign, and many of the heavy kitchen utensils now carefully treasured date back to an even earlier day.

Philippe de Comines, the great chronicler of the times, warmly praises King Edward's open and fearless manner, and especially commends his generosity

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in war. He writes: " King Edward told me that in all the battles which he had gained his way was that when victory was on his side, to mount a horse and ride about crying out, ' Save the common soldiers but put the gentry to the sword.' "

One of the ducal castles was evidently at Ghent and another at Cologne, for Caxton mentions in his prefaces in later years that he was resident at Bruges, at Ghent, and at Cologne, and that he had much leisure, but was all the more bent on persevering with the translation of the old romances. " I thought in myself it should be good to translate it (*The Histories of Troy*) into our English, to the end that it might be had as well in the royaume of England as in other lands." He tells us too that it was " begun in Bruges, and continued in Ghent and finished in Cologne in time of the troublous world and of the great division in the royaumes of England and France, that is, to wit, the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and seventy-one."

At Cologne a vigorous centre of the new, mysterious art of ' printing ' was growing up ; and consequently we may imagine Caxton making friends there with the silent busy men and, by slow degrees, getting to understand more and more of the wonderful trade secret. For, devoted as he was to his translator's art, he found the mechanical labour of writing out his version very wearisome. His *Apologia* in the Third Book of his *Recueil* says : " Thus end I this book, which I have translated after mine author as nigh as God hath given me cunning, to Whom be given thanks and praises.

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And forasmuch as in the writing of the same my pen is worn, mine hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with overmuch looking on the white paper, and my courage not so prone and ready to labour as it hath been, and that age creepeth on me daily and feebleth all the body; and also because I have promised to divers gentlemen and to my friends to address them as hastily as I might this said book, therefore I have practised and learned, at my charge and dispense, to ordain this said book in print, after the manner and form as you may here see; and is not written with pen and ink as other books are to the end that every man may have them at once."

A book with fair pages covered with words 'not written with pen and ink' was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as great a wonder as in the nineteenth century were the first steam locomotive or the early automobiles. As, however, there was not yet a cursive (or running) script, the first printers copied the familiar manuscript characters (afterward to be known as the Black Letter type), and the difference between print and handwriting was not very easily recognized. This led to the insertion in most books of the announcement: "I, without pen or pencil, have imprinted this book." Another feature of the work of the early printers is often forgotten now that labour is so divided into different trades and machinery is plentiful. The German and Flemish workers from whom Caxton learnt the art had to make their own presses or adapt them from something already in use, to cut or cast their type, to make their own ink—

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even the 'dabbers,' or soft knots of sheepskin, with which to apply it had to be made; and besides reading and correcting their copies, they had to bind the book when printed.

Most inventions, in their progress toward perfection, leave, as it were, a trail of defeated ambitions, of ruined and disappointed men, and often of martyrs in their cause. That of printing was no exception. For although the cost of printing many copies of a book was much less than that of writing many copies, yet to print only a few, or to succeed in selling only a few, made the process much too expensive. Hence the hesitation with which a work was undertaken unless a sale were guaranteed by some patron. Caxton was fortunate enough to have powerful friends among the great, so that his knowledge of the hardships endured by some of the printers of Mentz and Bruges served, not to depress him, but to make him careful and far-seeing.

Among the nobles in attendance on the Princess Margaret, when she came to Bruges in 1468 as a bride, was a certain young peer, Lord Scales, brother to the Queen of Edward IV. When, three years later, Edward took refuge at the Burgundian court, this nobleman was in his retinue, and on one of these occasions became known to Caxton. They had evidently some similarity in tastes, and we may well fancy them discussing books together. By this time Lord Scales had reached his majority and become Earl Rivers, while his family was fast becoming the most powerful in England. A few years later we find Caxton 'emprinting' "The Dictes and



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notable wise sayings of the Philosophers, translated out of French by Antony Wydeville, Earl Rivers."

Before this happened, however, there were troubles and misfortunes for the royal house of Burgundy which undoubtedly affected Caxton. The fiery Duke, well-named *le Téméraire*, was bent on annexing the province of Lorraine, which separated his Burgundian dominions from those of the Netherlands. He also desired to seize Provence, once part of the old Burgundian kingdom. These ambitions stirred up powerful enemies: the Swiss League of the border Cantons, the Duke of Austria, and the King of France. Then occurred an alliance which at first appeared chivalrous and fair. The English King—shall we say in return for Burgundy's hospitality in the days of his exile?—brought over an army to help the Duke in his great designs. Charles, rash as ever, failed to meet his ally at Calais, and the artful French King, Louis XI, induced Edward to throw over the Duke of Burgundy and to take sides with France. The inglorious Treaty of Pecquigny in 1475 ratified this, and Edward returned home the richer by an immense sum of money and the promise of a yearly 'tribute' of ten thousand pounds. Two years later Duke Charles was killed in battle, his duchy was annexed by France, and his daughter Mary ruled over the Netherlands. We hear no more of the Duchess Margaret for some years, and probably from this time Caxton's service in the ducal household came to an end, and he gave himself up entirely to the mastery and practice of the art of printing.

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It was at this period that Caxton is believed to have married. Probably his bride was the daughter of some substantial Flemish burgher or Burgundian merchant, and by this time Caxton would himself have become almost Flemish. His early interest in books and later studies in translating lead us to suppose him to have had a considerable gift for languages in spite of the modest way in which he speaks of his attainments. He evidently did not become a rich man, as many merchants have done, but he seems to have cared more for other things than for money, and to have pursued generously his private hobbies as well as his daily trade. His reading of the high romances of olden days strengthened this bent of his mind, and we find him, some years later, upbraiding knights and gentlemen for spending their time in vain and foolish pleasures and for shunning all worthy contests of strength and skill. He presses upon his readers to note how, in the histories of King Arthur, "may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love and friendship, as well as cowardice, murder, hate and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil," he concludes, "and it shall bring you to good fame and renown."

Caxton was not, however, in any sense a Dry-as-dust. He says plainly elsewhere that, "In my judgment, histories of noble feats and valiant acts of arms and war which have been achieved of old time . . . are as well for to see and know their valiantness . . . as it is to occupy the ken and study overmuch in books of contemplation." There is preserved in a private library a scrap of parchment with some of

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Caxton's handwriting upon it. Carefully elaborated flourishes adorn the capital letters, and the neat characters stand in even lines, minute but clear, with the so frequently occurring phrase, "translated by me William Caxton at Westminstere."

## CHAPTER V: *The New Invention*

**D**URING the years 1471-6 Caxton journeyed through various German towns, and finally settled at Cologne, perhaps in partnership with one of the printers of that city. His impatience with the labour of writing and the slowness of hand-work in book production was stronger than ever, so that though he was approaching middle age he turned himself to the mastery of the new art. Apparently by this time he possessed several valuable manuscript translations, the work chiefly of his own hand and brain; but it was no small enterprise for a man of mature years to embark upon a new trade—and that one which might be expected to develop but very slowly. Probably during the latter part of the time he was collecting the necessary implements and materials, prescriptions for the making of ink, and particulars as to obtaining parchment and vellum, all of which would involve much trouble and expense. In his first printed book he announced, with openness and simplicity: “I have practised and learned at my great charge and dispense, to ordain this said book in print.”

He appears to have undertaken at about the same time the task of translating into French, and then of printing, a curious book, then a century old, written in Latin by a certain Brother Bartholomew, entitled *De Proprietatibus Rerum*. Though Latin was still the language of scholarship and of devotion, French was the tongue of the noble patrons of the new art

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in Flanders, and, to a certain extent, in England. Thomas Warton, the old historian of English poetry, reminds us of our debt to French Literature when he says: "By means of French translations, our countrymen, who understood French much better than Latin, became acquainted with many useful books which they would not otherwise have known." The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid was another work translated by the busy Caxton; a manuscript copy of this is one of the treasures of Magdalen College Library, Cambridge.

Translation from the classics had become a pursuit in favour with men of rank even before Earl Rivers produced his *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* in 1477. The Earl of Worcester, who was beheaded during the brief Lancastrian supremacy in 1470, had already translated Cicero's *De Amicitia*; the companion work, *De Senectute*, Caxton himself afterward translated. But the most famous of the early books printed by Caxton was *The Game and Playe of the Chesse*. This was a very curious work of a French priest, in which, under the guise of a description of how to play chess, there was introduced a considerable amount of moral teaching. Caxton printed it at Cologne in the original French, with woodcuts of the king, the queen, the fool, and the knight. The letterpress explained how a philosopher persuaded a cruel king of Babylon to amend his ways by teaching him to play chess and by explaining to him that the pieces and the moves were symbolical of the right and peaceful pursuits of the nation, from the men of highest degree to those of the lowest. Next were described the offices and

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duties of a king and a queen, the characteristics of the fool (in English changed to the bishop), the knight and the rook, and then very fully the classes of people represented in the eight pawns. The first class consisted of the tillers of the earth ; the second of smiths and metal-workers ; the third of advocates, notaries, and cloth-makers ; the fourth of merchants and exchangers ; the fifth of physicians, spicers, and apothecaries ; the sixth of taverners and victuallers ; the seventh of city guards, toll-takers, and customs officers ; and the eighth of messengers, couriers, and ' players at the dice.'

By the year 1475 the condition of things in the Flemish and Burgundian towns was sad in the extreme. Duke Charles the Bold had persisted in one warlike extravagance after another until the once-prosperous towns of his dominions were drained of their wealth by taxation and trade losses. In England things were more peaceful, King Edward IV having, on his restoration, completely crushed by confiscations and executions the Lancastrian baronage and silenced their sympathizers, while interfering little in the affairs of the rest of the nation. He was by nature, as so many warlike heroes have been, luxurious and pleasure-loving, and, when not engaged in some violent martial exercise, he was content to live an idle and self-indulgent life. He had replaced the extinct or fallen baronage of his predecessors' time with a new class of his own creation, in which, naturally enough, the family of his queen came foremost.

The greatest trouble of his reign had been the treacherous conduct of his brother, the Duke of

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Clarence, who had systematically intrigued against him. The death of Clarence was in late years generally attributed to the King or to his influence, though at the time there was no one of sufficient daring or integrity to assert the fact. The King's expedition to Calais in 1475 on behalf of the Duke of Burgundy, his sister's husband and previously his own host and protector, and his inglorious return laden with 'tribute' from the King of France, were all of a piece with the political methods of the time. The English people at large might well be satisfied to be spared the drain of heavy war-loans, and under the peaceful conditions that were established trade and national prosperity were progressing well.

Thus it was that in 1476 William Caxton returned to England, the bringer of a new art and the bearer of strange treasures in heavy chests and coffers, such as precious rolls of manuscript, phials of pigments and powders, and various implements of wood and metal, besides (most valuable of all!) a case of metal dies. Within his mind, too, was a store of learning and accumulated experience, and a quiet resolution to establish himself in his native land and show his countrymen the advantages of the great invention he had mastered abroad. Although little is known of his domestic affairs, we are sure that with him came his wife Maud. Landing from the boat at Queenhithe, or Dowgate, Caxton once again found himself in London, after an absence of nearly thirty years.

No great alteration would be noticeable in the appearance of the city: a few more brick houses, fewer low wooden ones; more windows in the larger

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houses instead of shuttered apertures ; also more division into separate rooms in the manors and great houses, a ' parloir ' separate from the ' refectory ' in monasteries, and rather more gorgeous style of dress among the nobles, and a soberer one (if possible) among persons of lesser rank ; these would be some of the alterations, but, on the whole, London had not changed greatly. Gaunt heads were still exposed on the turrets of London Bridge, the Barbican, and Temple Bar ; the river was still the great highway of traffic, and the royal barges, painted red, with high pavilions and great figures at the prow, passed up and down the river between Richmond and the Tower. We may suppose that the open ' ditch ' of Wall Brook had been covered in, in accordance with the endeavour made nearly forty years before, when Caxton's public-spirited master, Robert Large, bequeathed a handsome legacy toward the work.

The trend of daily life and behaviour under the growing prosperity of the people is shown in the records of one of Edward IV's infrequent parliaments. In order to check extravagance and display in dress an Act of 1464 decreed that " No yeoman or any other person under the degree of yeoman shall wear in the apparel for his body, any bolster, nor stuffing of wool, cotton, or caddis in his pourpoint or doublet, but a lining only, according to the same." Another indication is given in the *Chronicle of London*, by William Gregory ; a Papal decree in 1466 ordained that " No cordwainer shall make any pikes (the pointed toe ornaments) more than two inches long, or sell shoes on Sunday, or even fit a shoe upon a man's foot on



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Sunday, on pain of excommunication. Neither shall any cordwainer attend any fair on Sundays, under the same penalty." This Bull was approved by the King's Council and also confirmed by Act of Parliament, and a proclamation was made at Paul's Cross to that effect. Apparently the cordwainers appealed against the restriction in the interests of their trade, and the men of fashion continued very largely to ignore it.

One feature of mediæval trade customs was the rigorous limitation of workers to their own trades, and even to certain specified branches of the same trade. So strict were these that those who made boots and shoes might not repair them; those who made hats might not make caps; weavers and fullers might sell only retail in their own town and might not go beyond its limits to trade, as that would infringe the rights of the merchants. Caxton had come back to London, but he had stepped outside the boundaries of his own trade; he had to seek anew the 'freedom' of the city.

The art of writing was, for many centuries, almost the prerogative of the monastic orders. They and the royal lawyers and scriveners practised the art which hardly any other subject sought to master. But with the decay of religious fervour, the consequent ill-repute of some of the monasteries, and the slackening of the 'rule' of industry and piety, together with the increasing wealth and growing business intercourse among the citizens in great towns, the old monopoly existed no longer. It had, however, been succeeded by another—by the formation of 'guilds,'

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in which the bands of lay copyists were enrolled, and who plied their trade in certain recognized places and almost at certain fixed rates. One such was 'The Brothers of the Pen,' another the 'Guild of Writers,' yet another the 'Paul's Scriveners.' Their stations were near the gates of the cathedral enclosure or at the entrances of the great churches. Their dress was almost uniform, consisting of a long, heavy, tight-fitting cloak over a short tunic, the former with capacious lining or 'sleeves' in which sheets of parchment could be carried; an ink-horn hung from the girdle, and one or two feathered ends of quills were visible on the under tunic. A close cap on the head, and soft leather shoes with dull-coloured hose completed the attire of the professional 'writer.'

These men would undertake small tasks, such as correspondence, or great ones, such as the copying of an entire book. Sharing the pages among several of the workers, they would accomplish the task in a comparatively short time. We may easily understand how cold would be the welcome extended by this profession to the new art of printing, either in London or in the German or Flemish cities. Caxton was, therefore, unable to attempt to settle down in the London of which he was a 'freeman'; his freedom covered only the cloth-workers' trade. Yet he needed a town, not a country district, and required also the presence of people interested in books and wealthy enough to buy them. Hence he betook himself to Westminster, then, as formerly and for two centuries later, easily accessible by river but separated from London by three miles of almost impassable road.



A Scribe Writing

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From a manuscript of the fifteenth century in the  
British Museum



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Journeying by river the traveller would embark at Queenhithe, and after passing the wharves of the city he would see the palaces of the nobles and bishops, with their pleasaunces and gardens stretching down to the strand, and kept private by the water-gates at the foot of the steps. First, and most commanding, stood Baynard's Castle, built by Duke Humphrey of Gloucester fifty years before; then the monastery of the Black Friars; the Convent of Bride Well, that of the White Friars, then the Temple, just beyond the city boundary, with its round church built on the model of that over the Holy Sepulchre. Then came the splendid Durham House; the ruins of the Savoy Palace, seat of John of Gaunt, destroyed in the Wat Tyler riots of 1381 and not rebuilt until more than a century had passed; and York House, the residence of another royal duke and famous in later history as the birthplace of Francis Bacon. The landing-place at Westminster was near the royal Palace, which dated back to the Great Hall of William Rufus, close beside the Abbey of St Peter.

The precincts of the Palace adjoined those of the Abbey, and there was only a village beyond. The Abbey and the Palace alike were self-contained, providing, by means of enormous staffs of officials and workers, all the necessities of the residents within. In later days the palace of the White Hall, standing farther north, supplanted Westminster as a royal residence, but in Caxton's day the sovereigns used the latter continually. Among the great group of buildings comprising the Palace were the Exchequer Hall (with prisons beneath it) for finance business, and the Star

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Chamber for meetings of the king and his council. There were also the Queen's Hall, the Nursery, the King's Wardrobe, the Chandlery and the Almonry ; and surrounding these in a great enclosure were gardens, fishponds, vineries, granaries, and wort-yards. Near the river were the barracks, the stables, the mews, and the barns.

The Palace consisted rather of several connected buildings than of one ; it comprised the state chambers as well as houses for the king's privileged nobles and high officers. Much of the building was timber, finely-carved and well-proportioned ; there were lofty roofs, pointed gables, the rich colours of stained glass and painted walls ; bright tapestries and gay canopies, and everywhere the heraldic bearings of royal owner or aristocratic occupier. The courtyard and greensward of the Palace could accommodate all the busy splendour of guests and tournaments, and the entertainments of the frivolous company of nobles and knights with which Edward surrounded himself.

More important even than the Palace of Westminster was the Abbey Church and its surrounding monastery. In the latter half of the fifteenth century this ancient Benedictine foundation was at the height of its power and splendour. The Order had ever been renowned for scholarship and a large school for boys occupied one of the cloisters. Narrow desks, one behind another, accommodated the young learners, who were never permitted to speak to each other during school hours or to use any languages other than Latin or French.

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As in earlier days, the sons of nobles and even royal princes were received in the abbot's household for training; the gentler practices of knighthood supplemented the teaching of the school, while the duties of waiting on their elders, holding torches or lanterns, fetching and carrying implements, and performing other small services, accustomed them to some of the responsibilities of their future positions.

Besides its school the Abbey was famous for its scriptorium, wherein sat diligent monks copying and illuminating books. In an ante-chamber the steward and his clerks would be found keeping the accounts and records of the Abbey farms, rents, and expenditure; in the abbot's private rooms his secretaries and lawyers dealt with the Papal and foreign correspondence or the communications from the sovereign.

In common with all monasteries open hospitality was offered in the great hall; beyond this was the refectory of the monks, who took their meals in silence while a student or chorister read aloud from the Fathers or the Martyrology. Crowds of poor wayfarers and mendicants were received and fed at stated hours in the Almonry; political offenders and their attendants sought sanctuary within the monastery grounds, finding refuge, if necessary, in the fortified tower near the entrance, which no angry earl or sovereign dared storm.

The abbot, as became his office, had some separate and additional accommodation. The Jerusalem chamber was part of his residence in the time of King

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Edward IV ; the present dining-hall of the boys of Westminster School was the abbot's refectory ; their great schoolroom was his dormitory. Besides the continual round of services in the stately church (which began at two or three o'clock in the morning, and ended only with Compline at eight at night) there were not infrequently state ceremonials of one kind and another in the Abbey. During Caxton's residence abroad it had seen three coronations ; first, that of Margaret of Anjou when she became the bride of the young Henry VI in 1445 ; that of Edward IV himself in 1461 ; and four years later that of his Queen, Lady Elizabeth Grey.

Although in the years soon to come it was found that many of the religious foundations had outlived their usefulness, yet in 1476 they still formed centres of learning and of the useful arts. Agriculture and farming, primitive as was their condition, were managed best by the conventual landowners ; the knowledge and practice of medicine were largely in their hands ; they sustained much of the cost of draining land and making roads and bridges ; the care of the poor and the sick and the education of the young was entirely theirs.

To such a little kingdom within itself—consisting probably of not more than eighty professed monks and novices, but with visitors, professional and household staff, servitors, helpers and dependents, numbering between three and four hundred persons—came Caxton in the year 1476. We must not suppose him asking alms, favour or toleration ; he was prepared to rent such part of their out-buildings as would serve,



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and to add to the varied crafts of smith and chandler, weaver and fuller, pewterer and potter, the new art of printing. His settlement there, his methods of work and what he accomplished will be told in later chapters.

## CHAPTER VI: *At the Red Pale*

WE may be sure that Caxton had carefully planned his proceedings and was confident that the Abbot John of St Peter's, as the head of a Benedictine monastery, would be interested in the new invention for producing books. All fell out as he desired. The large extent of the monastery buildings and precincts made it almost like a little town, and Caxton was given possession of certain chambers in the outer buildings adjoining the Almonry. This centre for wayfarers was near the principal gate ; indeed it adjoined the Gate-house, a strong tower built over the entrance. Here was a prison (for, like the lay barons, each abbot and prelate had dungeons or cells for offenders), and in close proximity was the hospital for aged women, recently built by the charitable Countess of Richmond.

Thus in the shadow and seclusion of the Abbey Church of St Peter, amid its various activities, was planted the beginning of the new movement which was to change so greatly the old life and thought. But Caxton's chief idea was that in this powerful shelter and gracious centre of learning he would be free from vexatious restrictions and trade jealousies.

On the other hand, the new-comer was, no doubt, a welcomed inmate of that cloistered city, as a traveller, a man of affairs, and one who had occupied a responsible position in connexion with the leading merchant-guild, whose chief staple was at Westminster. We may suppose that Caxton had with him one or two

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copies of 'emprynted' books, and we may well believe that the clerks of the Abbey scriptorium would be greatly interested in the mysterious art by which "many copies were begun in one day and ended in one day."

The energetic worker let no grass grow under his feet. As soon as his press could be put together, some ink made, and the type set up, he issued a notice—in effect, an advertisement. This was couched in an adroit form of words: "If it please any man, spiritual or temporal, to buy any Pyes of two and three commemorations of Salisbury Use, emprynted after the forme of the present letter, which ben well and truly correct, let hym come to Westminstre in to the Almonrye at the Red Pale and he shall have them good chepe. *Supplico stet cedula.*" No advertisement of modern times, however ingeniously constructed, could have more points of interest than this fifteenth-century handbill. One precious copy is now preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

The announcement which reads so curiously is of a *Directorium*, showing clearly the 'commemorations' of feast days falling within the great festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide. As Easter is a 'movable' feast, *i.e.* falling on different dates in different years, the Ascension and Pentecost are movable also, while certain Saints' days are kept always on the same date. The greater feasts have precedence, so that lesser ones are transferred to other days if they come together. In pre-printing days it was no easy matter to determine the date of Easter for any year, and a great part of mediæval arithmetic, as studied in the cloister, had

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been devoted to calculations by which Easter might be found. But even in Caxton's day there was no general circulation of calendars, and the ones compiled in the separate monasteries were, of course, in script. Caxton was thus issuing a set of directions for the observance of the feasts in due order, or as we should now term it, an almanac. The peculiar term 'Pyes' seems to have referred to existing manuscript directories which, from abbreviations and alterations, were obscure and difficult to read. Curiously enough the word 'pie' to-day is applicable to type indiscriminately mixed, and thus connects the highly-developed art of the present day with the small beginnings of the first English printer.

This book was soon followed by others. Among the earliest was the French version of the *Histories of Troy*, as translated by Caxton's honoured friend, Raoul le Fèvre, chaplain to the Duke of Burgundy, and done into English by Caxton himself "at the commandement of the right hye, myghty and vertuouse Pryncesse hys redoubted lady Margaret, by the grace of God, Duchesse of Bourgoyne, of Brabant, etc." Next appeared his English version of the *Life of Jason*.

These ancient romances show only one of the forms of literature in which Caxton was interested. Soon he issued his translation of the *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, dedicating it to the King's brother, the Duke of Clarence, a young prince of unstable mind and treacherous instincts. Perhaps Caxton, greatly daring, hoped that the allegory in the book would win the Duke to more upright courses. The inscription dis-

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creetly assumes the best. "To the right noble, right excellent and vertuous Prince George duc of Clarence, Erl of Warwick and of Salisbury, grete chamberlayn of England and lieutenant of Ireland, oldest broder of Kynge Edward by the grace of God Kynge of England and of Fraunce your most humble servant William Caxton amonge other your servantes sendes unto you peas, helthe, joye and victorye upon your Enemyes. Right highe puyssant and joyous and vertuous desirs. Amen.

"Fynysshed the last day of Marche the yer of our lord God a thousand foure hundred and lxxiiij."

Then in a prologue he continues: "For as much as I have understand and knowe that ye are enclined unto the comyn wele of the Kynge our seyde sovereign lord, his nobles, lords and comyn people of his noble royaume of England, and that ye serve gladly the Inhabitations thereof enformed in good, vertuous, proffitable, and honeste manners: In whiche your noble persone with guydyng of your hows aboundeth gyving light and ensample unto all others." And it further says that the little book is printed in order that its teachings "may be applied unto the morality of the public weal, as well of the nobles and of the common people, after the Game and Playe of the Chesse."

We may imagine the Prince being shown a copy, with the fair inscription standing neat and bold on the first page, on one of his visits to the Red Pale. And it soon became the fashion for the courtiers to follow the example set by the King himself, and to visit the travelled Englishman in order to watch the

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mysterious process of which he was master. Caxton, who had known King Edward during the less happy days of his exile at his sister's court in Bruges, no doubt rejoiced in the signs of peace and stability in the government of England, while he also delighted in the proofs of royal favour which he received. For the King was a cultivated scholar, as lay learning went, and was the first monarch since King Henry III of whom this could be said. He was pleased to show himself the patron of learning and the arts, and during the latter years of his reign, when untroubled by revolts and wars, he varied his unworthy amusements and coarse pleasures with some occasional service to intellectual things. His Queen's brother, Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, perhaps first enlisted his royal interest in Caxton, for his collection of *Dictes and notable wyse Sayings of the Philosophers* was one of the books printed at the Red Pale in the year 1477.

This style of writing is found in all countries at a certain stage of literary development, and it formed a stepping-stone from the indirect teaching and suggestion of the fable to the sustained reasoning and argument of the treatise or the sermon. Short, detached 'sentences' which expressed clearly some one phase of truth and could be easily remembered were the learned examples of instructive composition, as proverbs or simple aphorisms were the popular ones. The collection made and translated by Earl Rivers was probably from the classical writers, Greek and Latin; another volume, however, was composed of modern examples from the original writings of a learned

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lady, Christine de Pisa, who was a notable figure at the court of King Charles V of France in the latter half of the fourteenth century.

Christine's collection of *Morale Proverbes*, in metre, was most highly esteemed in her own day, and even now, indeed, they take rank as admirable specimens of early French literature. One of her most striking productions was the *Dittié de Jeanne d'Arc*, though as this was written in the year of the author's death, 1429, she knew only of the wonderful achievements of the Maid. The monarch who had befriended Christine had passed away, so also had his successor, and the unworthy Charles VII was reigning when she died. Her father had been an astronomer of note, and during her early residence with him in France she had married; soon, however, she had been left a widow. Her sentiments were strongly royalist, and her religious thought in accordance with the teachings of the Church. Hence she opposed what may be called the 'free-thinking' tendencies of her day, which found expression in the second part of the curious old poem, the *Roman de la Rose*.

A somewhat similar book of detached reflections was *Memorare Novissima: which treateth of the Foure laste Thinges*, possibly compiled by the prior or sub-prior of the Abbey, both of whom were noted scholars. Still another was the *Curial* of Alain Chartier, an eloquent writer at the Burgundian court in the days of Duke Philip the Good. This consisted of moral and political counsels and reflections expressed in the clear, concise form to which the French tongue so readily lends itself. The writer is said to have had

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the best prose style of any before the sixteenth century.  
A couplet in Caxton's version runs :

Ther is no dangyer but of a vylayn,  
Ne pryde but of a poure man enryched.

It is interesting to find school books and one or two books intended for children among the productions at the Red Pale during these early years. A curious little book, *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, cast in the difficult old Ballade Royale metre, consisted of gentle admonitions as to right conduct and ended with a number of 'Moral Distichs,' in parallel columns :

Aryse erly	And to thy soupe soberly
Serue God deuoutly	And to thy bed merrily
. . . . .	And be there jocondly
Go to thy mete appetently	And slepe surely
And aryse temperately	

*The Chronicles of England* and the *Description of Britain* were the first history and geography books to be printed in England. The former is taken from the old *Chronicle of Brute*, "emprynted by me William Caxton In thabbey of Westmynstre by London fynysshid and accomplisshid the X day of Juyn the yere of thincarnacion of our Lord God M.CCCC.LXXX. And in the XX yere of the regne of kyng Edward the fourth"; the latter is taken from the *Polycronicon* of Ralph Higden. Caxton is supposed to have added certain details to this, and after giving a description of England's rivers and cities, provinces and bishoprics, he mentions the wonders of Stonehenge. "There be great stones and wondrous huge, and be



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reared on high, as it were gates set upon other gates ; nevertheless it is not known clearly nor aperceived how and wherefore they be so areared and so wonderful hanged."

Another book was a version of Cato's *Morals*, or, as Caxton puts it, *The Book called Caton*—a favourite school book of the Middle Ages for the teaching of Latin and moral maxims. A canon of Westminster Abbey translated this into English and Caxton printed it. It ends :

Here haue I fonde that shall you guyde and lede  
Straight to gode fame and leve you in hir hous.

In his preface Caxton wrote : " In my judgment it is the best book to be taught to young children in schools ; and also to people of every age it is full convenient if it be well understanden."

Caxton had very clear ideas as to the responsibility of printing books and thus making them more easily accessible to people in general. He shared in the general prejudice, which held when only a small minority could read, against making common knowledge the opinions of certain writers. Among such was part of Virgil's *Æneid*, which he translated into English through French ; he speaks of the difficulty he found in using suitable terms to express the meaning—a difficulty which any translator, however brilliant, will acknowledge. In the preface he declares : " Forasmuch as this present book is not for a rude uplandish man to labour therein nor to read it, but only for a clerk or noble gentleman that feeleth and understandeth in feats of arms, in love, in noble

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chivalry. . . .” Similarly he desired to limit the readers of his translation of Cicero’s *Book on Old Age*. As a foreword he says : “ This book is not requisite nor eke convenient for every rude and simple man, which understandeth not science nor cunning, and for such as have not heard of the noble policy and prudence of the Romans ; but for noble, wise, and great lords, gentlemen and merchants, that have been and daily be occupied in matters touching the public weal. . . .”

A special interest attaches to the printing of the curious old book, *The Mirrour of the World, or Thymmage of the Same*. This was a typical mediæval treatise, containing descriptions of a variety of things : the Seven Liberal Arts, or Foundations of Learning based upon the old Roman *trivium* and *quadrivium* (Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric in the one, and Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy in the other), and ending with an account of the earthly paradise. In the preface to this Caxton writes : “ The hearts of nobles, eschewing of idleness at such times as they have some other virtuous occupations in hand, ought to exercise them in reading, studying and visiting the noble feats and deeds of the sage and wise men . . . and among other this present book, which is called the *Image or Mirror of the World*, ought to be visited, read and known by cause it treateth of the world and of the wonderful division thereof. . . . I have made it so plain that every man reading may understand it, if he advisedly and attentively read it or hear it.” The enthusiastic worker had been moved to commend the book so highly as the result of his labours, for he had not himself chosen it, as was generally the case.

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He was commissioned to produce it by an esteemed member of the Guild of Cloth-workers, to which he himself belonged, as a gift to Lord Hastings. It was illustrated with woodcuts, and they serve to show us the style and manner of the dress and behaviour of the day.

The literature of France was laid under contribution, not only for works of romantic interest or religious import, but also for a type of writing peculiarly its own. *The History of Reynard the Fox* was a collection of satires upon the clergy and the nobility, woven into the form of beast-stories, and was the work of various authors, for one hundred and fifty years, from the middle of the twelfth century onward. But, happily, there was no need to seek always in other literatures for material. We read that Caxton was a devoted lover of Chaucer's works, and when it appeared that his first edition of the *Caunterburye Tales* had many errors and imperfections, he had the type set up entirely afresh in order to produce the work worthily. He wrote of Chaucer thus in an epilogue to one of his books: "In all his works he excelleth in my opinion all other writers in our English. For he writeth no void words, but all his matter is full of high and quick sentences, to whom ought to be given laud and praising for his noble making and writing."

It seems that Caxton and Chaucer were in some ways alike in character and temperament, except that the poet had a buoyancy and merriment of spirit which apparently Caxton lacked. His translation of the *Consolations of Philosophy* of the old Roman philosopher, Böethius, especially stirred Caxton to

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admiration ; “ first translator of this book into English and embellisher in making the said language ornate and fair, which shall endure perpetually ; and therefore he ought to be eternally remembered.”

This noble Roman of the late fifth and early sixth centuries was counsellor to the Emperor Theodoric, but after many years of faithful service he became distrusted by his imperial master and was cast into prison. To fortify his soul in the noisome dungeon in which he was confined, he set about a task which should lift him above present miseries ; this was nothing less than the recounting, under the form of a Vision, the many *Consolations of Philosophy* revealed to him by a beautiful Presence. His book was the delight of all mediæval thinkers and the model of many later allegories.

In the loft of St Alban's Grammar School was discovered, only about half a century ago, a perfect copy of Caxton's *Böethius*, soaked with rain and decaying with age, but it was intact and the leaves were uncut. It is now carefully treasured among the Caxton books in the British Museum.

## CHAPTER VII: *King* *Edward IV*

WHEN Caxton set up his press at the Red Pale in the Almonry at Westminster, the monarch, Edward IV, was a man in the prime of life, gay of demeanour, luxurious in his habits, and fond of the pageantry of court ceremonial. His rule was by that time unquestioned; his baronage was almost entirely of his own creation, and the people at large were content with a sovereign who had shown himself to have no lust for war, and who raised his revenue without oppressive taxation. By temperament idle and insensitive, he bore for a long time with what seems extraordinary patience the treacherous devices of his brother George, the Duke of Clarence. But when at length fully roused he took drastic steps and showed himself stayed by no scruple. He arraigned the Duke before Parliament in 1478 on the charge of treasonable plotting with the King's enemies (the Lancastrians). The session opened, as usual, with a sermon by the Chancellor, the Archbishop of York, on the text, "He beareth not the sword in vain," and the preacher illustrated it with many examples of punishment inflicted on those who broke their oath of fealty.

There was no opposition and but little discussion; the Commons approved and the Peers passed the sentence. Some few months before this the wretched Clarence had fled from the Court, for, besides his intrigues against the King, he was perpetually quarrelling with his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

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The brothers differed completely in temperament and disposition. The elder was unstable, peevish, discontented and, though ambitious, unable to persist in any responsible action. Gloucester was content to be the right hand of the King, to manage his stewardship, to carry out his behests and desires, and quietly and efficiently to make himself indispensable. In his position as Great Chamberlain he would have ample opportunity for offering slights and provocations to his irritable and wayward brother, and it is possible that he used it.

The Great Hall at Westminster was the scene of the attainder trial. King Edward was present and heard the clerk read the skilfully-worded charge, ending with the protestation that "the King remembering ever . . . the tender love which of youth he bare unto him could have found it in his heart upon due submission to have forgiven him, but that he had shown himself incorrigible. And moreover since that the King must defend his surety and royal issue, although he be right sorry, yet considering justice a virtue, he doth hereby declare George, Duke of Clarence, guilty of high treason." The accused denied and protested, and demanded to be allowed 'wager of battle.' From his prison in the Tower came vague rumours, and presently it was known that he had met his death by some form of violence, on the King's responsibility, though 'of his clemency' he had not required the indignity of a public execution. This was the last occasion for five years on which King Edward summoned a parliament, and the sharp, summary dealing of the monarch

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had by this time terrorized his foes into silent impotence.

Looking back to the time of Caxton's arrival in England, it seems that it was the period when perhaps the relations between members of the royal house bore the nearest semblance to peace. The King and his brothers would be seen in public together, and on one occasion at least they journeyed together to Westminster to see the 'emprinting presse' in the Almonry. We may fancy we see the royal party sweeping into the quiet precincts, with their train of nobles and gentlemen, pages and attendants, and a noisy rabble of hounds and pet monkeys on leash. The King, 'head and shoulders taller than the people,' of commanding presence, magnificently attired and wearing heavily-ringed gloves, we may think of as jesting with those near him, and occasionally putting curt, clear questions as he scrutinized the clever, clumsy mechanism at work. Near him, one on either hand, would stand the unbrotherly dukes, murmuring some comment or query into the royal ear—Clarence, restless, peevish, and with harsh shrill voice; Gloucester, dark, scornful, moving stiffly with a slight limp, and with a perpetual gesture of shouldering off his senior.

Probably the little Prince of Wales, then about six years of age, was of the party. Rather overweighted by his governor and councillors he might have been, but with boyish interest he would watch the murky helpers of the wonderful Caxton as they manipulated their 'dabbers' or turned the great creaking handle of the screw. And then the breathless

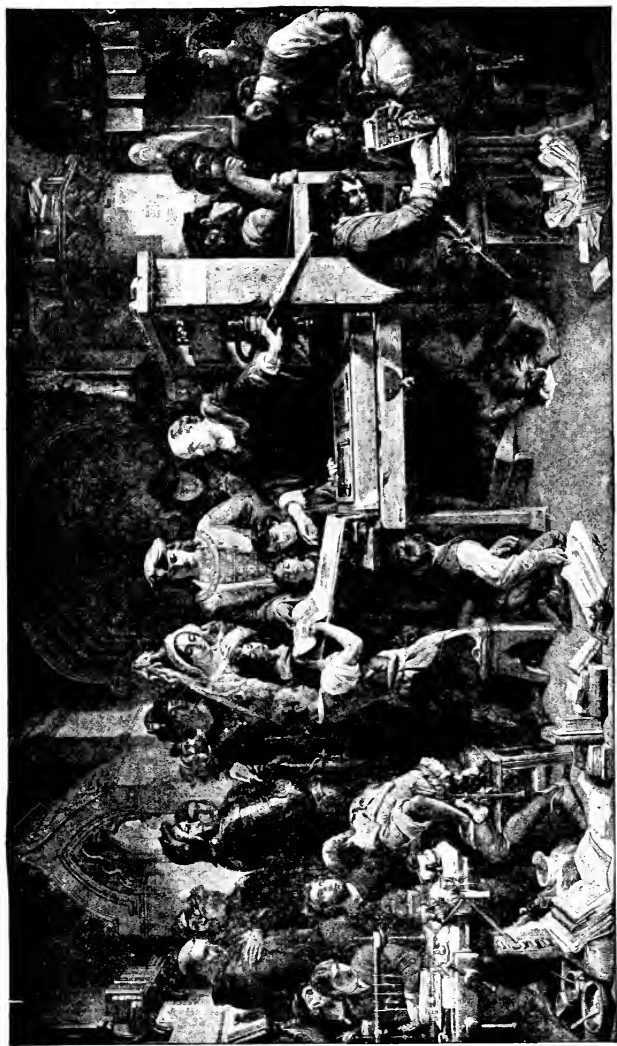
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eagerness of the whole party as a fair sheet was withdrawn from the press, all evenly 'emprinted' and never a word framed with the pen! There is a picture which shows Earl Rivers on bended knee offering to the King a printed copy of his *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, but Prince Edward was not on that occasion one of the party.

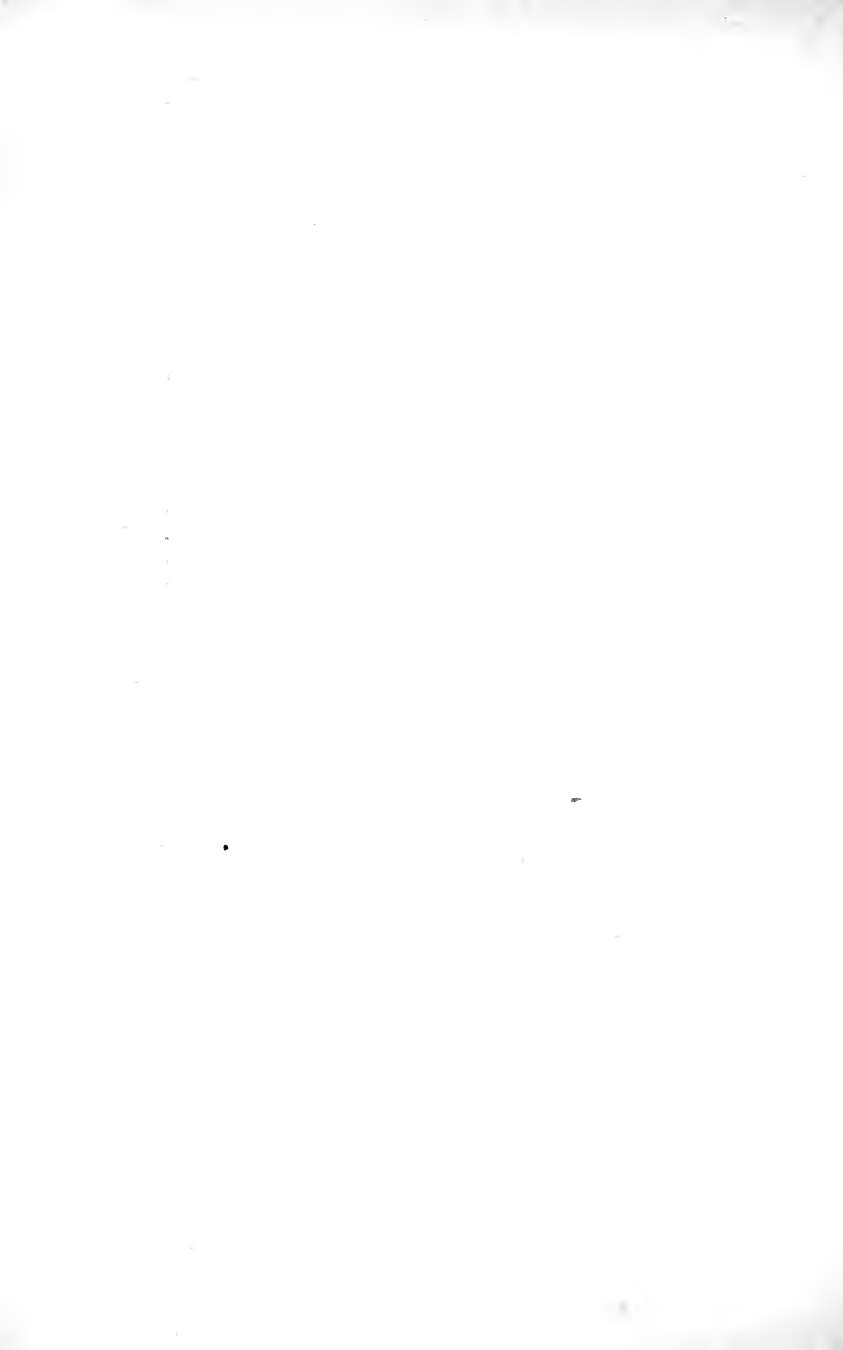
By the time that the King's vengeance had descended and the Duke of Clarence had disappeared, the Prince of Wales was living away from his parents, with his governor, the Earl Rivers, at Ludlow Castle. There he had quite a Court household, with chancellor and chamberlain, treasurer and steward, and a staff of purveyors and attendants. "Why at Ludlow?" we may ask. Because there were threatenings of uprisings amongst the Welsh, and it was thought that to have the Prince in residence on the Marches would tend to calm and still revolt. The task of Earl Rivers as Lord President of the Council of the Marches was no easy one just then.

The revengeful King, who hesitated at no crime to remove a political foe, showed himself gentle and considerate in his plans for his heir. He himself drew up the series of regulations by which the young Prince's life was to be ordered during his minority. His hours of study, his amusements, his rest, and his table were minutely arranged. "He is to rise early, to attend Mass, to begin directly after his meal some form of virtuous learning." While he dines 'noble stories' are to be read to him; afterward he is to be encouraged in all seemly sports and to be sent 'merry and joyous' to bed. For companions he





Caxton showing a Specimen of his Printing to Edward IV  
Daniel Maclise, R.A.



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is to have the sons of noble lords and gentlemen, and neither he nor they may in any wise be permitted to pass their days in idleness or in foolish pursuits. Prince Edward seems to have been a fair and comely boy, of a gentle disposition and sensitive to displeasure or rough jesting, immensely admiring his jovial, handsome father, though not a little afraid of him. The heir to the throne had a younger brother Richard, who was five years of age, a merry, fearless child, delighting in animals and noisy sports. At the age of one year he had been created Duke of York by his proud father, and before he was five he was betrothed to the little Lady Anne, daughter of the Duke of Norfolk, and the last of the dukes of the name of Mowbray.

A few days before the assembling of the Parliament which was to try the Duke of Clarence for treason, there took place in St Stephen's chapel of the Abbey a stately ceremony of betrothal. All the great nobles of the realm were present ; the bishops and clergy ; the Lord Chancellor and his suite ; Prince Richard's sisters, and the Prince of Wales. The Lady Elizabeth and Lady Mary were both older than the Prince of Wales ; next came the Lady Cecily, and then Richard, the hero of the occasion. The next in age were the Lady Margaret and the Lady Anne, who appear to have been left at home in the royal nursery at Sheen. The Duke of Gloucester, as Great Chamberlain, was controller of the ceremony ; the Duke of Clarence was away, but closely watched by the King's myrmidons in readiness for the coming trial.

A splendid procession swept from the council

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chamber to the chapel; heralds, trumpeters, and great dignitaries preceded the little central figure; behind him walked, on the right, the tall imperious King, and on the left the Prince of Wales. With slow and stately steps, and at a pace accommodated to that of the tiny satin-clad Prince Richard, the gorgeous line entered the chapel, within which, in the royal enclosure, there waited the Queen and the young princesses with their train of ladies and knights. From another door entered the little Lady Anne, barely up to the elbow of the kindly Earl Rivers, who supported her on one side while the Earl of Lincoln supported her on the other. Her heavily-embroidered gown of white satin, besprinkled with seed pearls, was a miniature copy of what her mother might have worn; its long train was borne by six pages, eldest sons of peers, companions of the Prince of Wales. With the conclusion of the ceremony there was a splendid admission of youthful knights, when numbers of the gallant boys were presented with their spurs. Then followed banquets and tourneys, jousts and gay spectacles for all the aristocratic beholders. If the principal personages in whose honour it was all devised wondered what it was about, we may at least hope that they enjoyed the glitter and display and had some intelligible merry-making of their own in their respective nurseries when it was all over.

King Edward delighted in all forms of ceremonial, and carried them out and exacted their careful fulfilment with whole-hearted thoroughness. His royal predecessor, King Henry VI, in his ill-health, anxiety, and preoccupation with other matters,

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maintained but a slovenly Court, although a very extravagant one. Very different was that of Edward IV; carefully ordered, well administered, and strictly controlled, it gave good return in magnificence and impressiveness for its lavish expense. His eldest daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, born in 1465, had her own little Court and household. When she was only two years of age manors and estates were settled on her, and until the birth of the Prince of Wales four years later, she was regarded by her ambitious father, not only as the Princess Royal, but as heiress apparent to the throne. An attempt was made to betroth her to the young Prince Edward, son of Henry VI and Queen Margaret, the Lancastrian Prince of Wales. This falling through, she was betrothed to the Dauphin, afterward Louis XII of France. She and her sister Mary, who was only a year younger, had great trouble and care bestowed on their education. They had French and Spanish governesses, and learned to speak and to read those languages; accomplished copyists were employed to teach them to write; foreign musicians taught them to play on the harp and the *vielle* (the precursor of the violin), and Master Walter Halliday, the president of the King's minstrels, instructed them in singing.

Their royal father appears to have loved music. He liberally supported the 'gentlemen' and the 'children' of the chapel royal who sang the services, and not only permitted the existence of a band of minstrels in the royal household, but established it as a 'Gild of Music'; furthermore, he required their

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attendance upon him wherever he resided. Two minstrels formed part of the Prince of Wales' household at Ludlow, and the committing to memory of some of their verses formed part of his lighter exercises. Dancing was also one of the accomplishments of the young princesses; this we learn from an account preserved of the festivities held on the occasion of a visit of Louis de Bruges, envoy of Charles, Duke of Burgundy.

The King seems to have delighted to show honour to his Burgundian guest, and to return with lavish hand the hospitality which had been shown him during his exile in 1471. After supper, we read, he was taken to the Queen's apartments, where she and her ladies were singing, playing and dancing. "Also the King danced with my lady Elizabeth his eldest daughter," says the enraptured writer. The next day they arose early, sang matins and heard Mass in the King's chapel, and then had "grete sporte" in the Park adjoining Windsor Castle; here, whether as prize, trophy or mere splendid gift, the Sieur Louis de Bruges had presented to him by the King, with many courtly compliments, a royal crossbow, with strings of silk, and a quiver of gilt-headed arrows, all enclosed in a case covered with purple velvet, and with the royal arms and badges emblazoned thereon. Then there followed deer-hunting in Windsor forest, a visit to the King's private gardens and vineyard, and a return to the Castle in time for evensong. In the late afternoon was a grand banquet given in her own apartments by the Queen; again the young 'Dauphiness,' as the King loved to call her, was present, and was at the High Table on the daïs, to

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which *Sieur Louis* was invited. At a long table, placed lengthwise, was a great array of ladies, 'seated all at one side,' facing into the room and served from thence. Still farther removed were the Queen's gentlewomen, similarly seated, and at corresponding tables were the attendants and servitors of the honoured guest. Again, after the banquet, there was dancing, when the Lady Elizabeth had for her partner her indulgent father, and later she had the Duke of Buckingham, her uncle, who had married the Queen's sister Catherine, but was still uncomfortably Lancastrian by tradition and instinct. The King's brother, Richard of Gloucester, was Lord Chamberlain at this time, and after the entertainment, at about nine of the clock, he showed the gratified envoy to the suite of rooms prepared for his private use.

Carpeted floors and silken and tapestried hangings adorned three stately rooms; others were arranged for sleeping. In one was a canopied frame, with a bed of down, silken sheets, fine fustian coverings, and a counterpane worked with cloth of gold and lined with ermine; in another was a couch, with a feather bed, tented hood, linen hangings, and, in a corner, that most unusual fitting, a cupboard. In yet another room were baths, with white hangings. After their baths and toilet the guests were offered various delicacies, green ginger, syrups, comfits and hippocras before going to bed. These dainty and careful arrangements, and especially the fitting and furnishing of the curtains and hangings, were under the personal direction of the Queen as to patterns, making, and placing. This is a very pretty instance of the notable

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housewifery of the royal ladies of our land, and we may imagine the courtly compliments of which the Burgundian envoy would deliver himself as one sumptuous item after another was displayed.

In the year 1478, not many months after the betrothal of little Prince Richard and the disappearance of the Duke of Clarence, the Queen gave birth to another son, who was named George—apparently the fondness for family names was stronger than the distaste for painful associations! His father created him Duke of Bedford as soon as he was christened, but the little fellow lived only till the following March. Then the sturdy Richard, aged six, was given the vacant Dukedom of Bedford, and also made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, with power to appoint a deputy! This was an office formerly held by the Duke of Clarence.

The King's political judgment, not merely his ambition, no doubt dictated the bestowal of great offices and dignities upon his young children, as well as upon the members and connexions of his wife's family. The measures tended to give an air of stability to his throne and power, and as they were supported by his observance of strict laws of homage and courtesy to all persons connected with him, there was built up a habit of respect and ceremony which gave dignity to the royal house. The early plans of the great Earl of Warwick for him included, we remember, a marriage with the Princess of France. The young King's impetuous alliance with the Lady Elizabeth Grey, a widow, and a member of the Woodville, or Wydvylle, family, might have been a crushing blow to his kingly



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ambitions. There were always some people who would remember that he had chosen as his wife a lady who was but an attendant in the ante-chamber of the haughty Queen Margaret, Henry VI's wife. Hence, to surround himself and her, their children and her relatives with pomp and ceremony was at least a way of silencing tongues and perhaps of dimming memories.

Some memoirs kept by a foreign visitor, who came as ambassador from the King of Bohemia, describe with awe the strict etiquette of the English Court. "Very great reverence is paid always to the King; even the greatest noblemen kneel before him. At a banquet the King's stool was central and alone; none spoke without obeisance; in drinking, the cup was raised and solemn salutation made to the King." Similarly the Queen maintained her state in her private apartments, where he was permitted to visit her. Her Majesty "sat on a golden stool alone at her table; her mother and the King's sister" (the Lady Anne was still unmarried) "stood far below her. And when the Queen spoke to her mother or to the Lady Anne, they kneeled down every time before her. . . . And all her ladies and maids, and those who waited upon her, even great lords, had to kneel while she was eating, which continued three hours." Then, as we have seen before, there was dancing after the banquet: "the Lady Anne danced with two Dukes, and the beautiful dances and reverences performed before the Queen the like I have never seen," says the delighted narrator. "After the dance the King's singing men came in and sang." Probably some of the songs

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were in a new form of composition, recently made known by Belgian composers and afterward to be popularized as the 'Madrigal.'

This entertainment perhaps took place at Sheen Palace, for during his stay the ambassador was taken to London on the King's barge and shown his fort-palaces, the Tower and Baynard's Castle, and the treasures of his armouries.

The year 1478 was a busy one, but by no means only in receptions and courtly ceremonials. The King had always interested himself greatly in the trade of the country, and though his methods were strongly 'Protectionist' (as we should now call them) they suited that stage of development of national industries; for example, the forbidding of the exportation of wool led to its better manufacture into cloth. One provision, which has been echoed from time to time, was that which prohibited the shipping of merchandise in 'foreign bottoms,' and this led to the formation of a fleet, which was used indifferently for purposes of war, of trading, and of the King's voyages. The *Mary Redcliffe*, 500 tons, and the *Mary and John*, 900 tons, both Bristol-built ships, were two of the largest in the fleet. Not only were there treaties of trade drawn up with Burgundy and Flanders, but also with several other continental countries, including Denmark and Portugal.

One province in which the King's activity was marked was, as might be expected, that of building. During the twelve peaceful years of his absolute rule the Wall of the City of London was rebuilt, the Tower was enlarged and repaired, and the palace of

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Whitehall was restored and ornamented. The Chapel of the Knights, dedicated to St George at Windsor, was also rebuilt and much enlarged. Some of the necessary expense the arbitrary King defrayed by the seizure of endowments belonging to King's College, Cambridge, and its school, Eton College. He enlarged and beautified his palaces at Eltham and Sheen, favourite residences of his Queen, and strengthened Dover Castle. His wife took under her patronage Queen Margaret's foundation at Cambridge University, and founded another hall, calling it St Catherine's—the name which she gave to her little daughter who was born in 1479. Also for the first time in English history a Poet Laureate was appointed as one of the officials of the King's court.

## CHAPTER VIII: *The Royal House of York*

THE year 1480 was notable for two events concerning the royal family. One was that another little princess was born and was christened Bridget, the other that the Duchess-Dowager Margaret of Burgundy paid a visit to her English home. Her husband, Duke Charles the Bold, had died in battle three years before, and her step-daughter Mary succeeded to his Flemish dominions. The greater part of the Duchy proper had been annexed by the French king, leaving only Franche Comté, or the Free County of Burgundy, to the heiress. She had married Maximilian, the son of the Emperor Frederick III, and thus a strong German influence was brought to bear in securing the Low Countries from the ambitious designs of Louis XI.

Their son Philip was a possible husband for the Princess Anne of England, fourth daughter of King Edward, now aged five years, and a proposal was made that the English King should shake himself free from the French obligations and become the ally of Flanders. But Edward hesitated, as the French pension of fifty thousand crowns, stipulated in the Treaty of Pecquigny, was faithfully paid by Louis, and Maximilian was slow to undertake the same scale of bribery as well as to promise marriage estates to the little Philip. The King of France tried to interest the Dowager-Duchess in a French alliance, and to counteract this the visit to England was proposed.

## *The Royal House of York*

Great preparations were made for her reception, and in the month of July she arrived.

There was put at her disposal a fortified house not far from Baynard's Castle, at Cole Harbour, a name still preserved in London in St Nicholas' Church, Cole Abbey, and Coldharbour Lane, off Thames Street. The house was hung with rich tapestries and furnished with couches, stools, chests, and a complete array of kitchen implements. One of the royal stewards was put in charge, and litter and fodder in enormous quantities were provided for her horses. Beyond this, splendid new liveries with the Edwardian badge were supplied for her attendants; they were made of silver and gold cloth, and velvet purple and black. Housing for her steeds in procession were also ready, and a barge for her service, with the boatmen in royal liveries, swung at the harbour stairs. The style of dress at this period for retainers and servants was that known as parti-coloured, *i.e.* one side of the costume, leg, sleeve, trunk might be of dull red perhaps, and the other of tawny; or one side of dull blue and the other of grey; the tawny and the grey being the humble equivalents of the gold and silver of aristocratic dress.

We are sure that during her stay, which lasted for ten months, the Duchess was taken along the river to Westminster to see the working of the 'emprinting presse' at the Red Pale. Caxton's *Description of Britain* appeared in that year, so that perhaps the Duchess witnessed the actual printing of some of the sheets, and would learn with interest that it was the compilation of her sometime secretary, who had

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resumed his labours of translation years before at her dread command. Undoubtedly the Castle of Fotheringay, the old home of King Edward and the birthplace of the Duchess herself, would have come in for some description. Probably, too, Ludlow Castle and the 'Marches' which it commanded were described, for there the King had spent some years of his youthful life and had seen his father entertain King Henry VI, on one occasion at least, within its walls.

Other and more exciting amusements were devised for the Duchess during her stay. The ordinary accounts of the royal household, and especially for the 'wardrobe,' are much swollen during the year 1480—undoubtedly through the expenditure incurred for the Burgundian lady. Princess Elizabeth (still called the 'Dauphiness,' although the French king hung back strangely from the alliance), now aged nearly fifteen, had a roll of cloth of gold for a robe; the Prince of Wales received a similar roll of white cloth, while Prince Richard had a saddle and equipment for riding, with apparently a complete outfit in velvet, satin, and sarsenet. By this time he would have quitted the nursery and the ladies' bower, and for some part of the year at least would be residing in a great household, for this in mediæval times was the equivalent of the Public School. Perhaps he was placed in the care of the Archbishop of York, perhaps in that of the Duke of Northumberland, and there he would begin to learn the duties of noble boyhood and the few book-subjects of the time. The young princes and their sisters would certainly have been

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permitted to share in some of the festivities of that gay summer. There would be tourneys and jousts on Tothill Fields, near Westminster Palace ; hunting in Windsor Forest ; hawking on the Essex Marshes and the low-lying fields in Westminster, now known as Pimlico. Even to visit the chief royal falconry in the great Mews (near to where the National Gallery now stands) would be a delightful treat. There highly trained birds clung pensively to stout perches, some fiercer ones chafed, never without their jesses ; young falcons were being taught the rudiments of good manners on the wrist, and fluffy little goshawks—most treasured of all—tumbled about in cosy nests. The inspection would be full of pleasure for the privileged young people. Then there were the animals in the Tower Enclosure—the King's leopards, three lions, a dromedary, and a cage of marmosets. Always, too, there was the pleasant river-journey in the gaily-painted royal barge, manned by stalwart rowers in the bright liveries of the King. The red and blue oars gleamed in the sunshine, the King's minstrels, ensconced in a tower on deck, played merry airs ; heralds and trumpeters blew fanfares of warning, and within the canopied enclosure amidships reclined the genial Monarch, his Queen and their august visitor, with some privileged younger members of the family and the great ladies and nobles of the court. Stately swans glided up and down the stream ; ducks and waterfowl gathered in the sedges ; cargo boats, rowed by swarthy crews, crept slowly along to the wharves, and laden ferry-boats made their way with difficulty from bank to bank.

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The Duchess Margaret, who had arrived in Bruges in 1468 for her marriage, had had but a short wedded life, her husband having been killed in battle in 1477. She had no children and her step-daughter was nearly of her own age. We may imagine her contrasting her lonely lot with that of her brother's wife, the English Queen. For though little Prince George had died before he was a year old, King Edward had now nine children (counting the baby Bridget), two boys and seven girls. The Lady Mary, the second daughter, aged about thirteen, was very delicate, and two years later fell ill and died. The third daughter, Margaret, was the namesake of the Duchess; the next one, Anne, was called after another sister of the King.

We may imagine that, in accordance with royal custom in all ages, the Duchess Margaret not only received handsome entertainment, but also bestowed noble gifts upon her relatives and the distinguished members of the court. Enormous bales and heavy chests, embossed coffers and bulging sacks were stowed away, we may be sure, in the dark, cramped holds of the little Flemish vessels, and moved the curiosity of the onlookers at the disembarking. Presently they would be unpacked and a variety of beautiful things distributed; many of them were for personal decoration in that age of fondness for show. There would almost certainly be some 'picture-blocks' for the inmates of the royal nursery, for the Low Countries were the home of the mediæval wood-cut. Some packs of playing-cards would delight the elders. The 'court' cards were often most elaborately and beautifully painted, some bearing portraits of great



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men and women of recent times. In many representations of the time one card bore the portrait of the wife of the French king, and one that of Joan of Arc. The knaves, too, were much more like *knaben* (boys) than our modern ones—gallant lads in pretty dress instead of the curious conventional figures we know. The suits were not at that time rigorously fixed as hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades; one suit, for instance, was two bells.

Then it is possible that for the young princesses, her nieces, the Duchess Margaret had brought silken hose, gaily-painted shoes, or soft 'couvre-chefs' for the head. For the Queen, or indeed for King Edward himself, there could be hardly any gift more pleasing than some flasks of cordial, vials of unguents, or pots of delicate medicaments. The King himself was a great patron of apothecaries; and every mistress of a household kept a medicine-store as faithfully as her linen-chest. Specifics against the prevailing epidemic of the plague were quite usual. Perfumes were highly esteemed, and must occasionally have been sorely needed both in homes and streets. Some years earlier King Edward had sent to his brother-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy, a finger-ring with a diamond inset, and a similar ornament may have been among his sister's gifts on this occasion. Probably, too, she had brought for some esteemed host or representative one or more examples of the 'printed' books of Bruges or Cologne or Mentz—for the Duchess was ever a book-lover. And, finally, there would be casks and flagons of the sweet red wines, and white, for which her country was already famous.

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However much impressed the Duchess Margaret might have been with her brother's kingdom, Court, and stately surroundings, she must have been struck with the change in himself. The nine years that had passed since their meeting during his exile had left their mark on the great frame and resolute mind of the King. His ruthless punishment of his foes, open or suspected, had terrorized his nobles into obedience; his impetuous and reckless conduct of affairs had won the admiration of the bulk of his subjects of lesser rank, and, in general, he was popular. But his ambitions were continually being frustrated, and the miseries of remorse made themselves felt as the years passed. His self-indulgent habits impaired his health; his impaired health affected his spirits and destroyed his energy. Indeed he seemed hardly the same man as the exiled Edward of 1471 who, with a handful of supporters, made a dash for his own country and triumphantly seized his realm.

He was perpetually harassed with the thought of the succession to the throne. Only a few months before the arrival of the Duchess Margaret he had received envoys from the French king laden with rich gifts, which appealed to his love of wealth and display. But no definite word was spoken as to when the 'Dauphiness' prospective was to become the Dauphiness in fact, and he began to be irritably conscious that he was being trifled with by France. Affairs with regard to Scotland were also unsettled. The Scottish king, James III, had suggested that his brother the Duke of Albany should marry the widowed Duchess Margaret, but King Edward had

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hesitated to sanction this match for fear of offending Louis XI. King James was as ambitious and as ready to drive a bargain as Edward himself, and he interfered in the matters in dispute between Louis XI and Maximilian, the husband of Mary of Burgundy. High-handed as usual, the English King had seized the Duke of Albany and imprisoned him, but he had escaped a few months before this time and had taken refuge at the court of Louis. This was another occasion for anxiety as, should the French king espouse his cause and support the Scottish king, an invasion of England would probably ensue.

The King's plan for his beloved heir Edward, Prince of Wales, was that he should marry the daughter of the Duke of Brittany, evidently with the idea of securing certain dominions across the Channel. A still more ambitious alliance was hoped for at the time of the Duchess Margaret's visit—the marriage of the little Lady Catherine, aged three, to Prince John of Spain, the third son of Ferdinand and Isabella. In all these lofty designs for his children Edward had the ready sympathy, and indeed the eager suggestions, of his Queen. Partly to gratify her and partly to surround himself with a new nobility, who might be expected to be loyal to the sovereign who had honoured them, the King had arranged, or sanctioned, the marriage of the Queen's six sisters to noblemen, whom he advanced to high positions.

The government of England during Edward IV's reign was practically a military control. Parliament was summoned but once between 1474 and 1483, and that was only to procure the condemnation of the

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Duke of Clarence. The Duke of Gloucester was the King's right-hand man; officially he was 'Great Chamberlain and Lord High Admiral,' where 'Admiral' is not an exclusively naval title. Henry Bourchier, Earl of Essex, was Treasurer, and the Archbishop of York was Chancellor. Early in the reign it had been proposed, as one way of maintaining peace with Scotland, that the Duke of Clarence should marry Margaret, the sister of the Scottish king, James III. This fell through, and some years later (1474) the infant son of James was betrothed to King Edward's fourth daughter, Cecily, aged five. But the ceremony, though faithfully carried out, was not enough to secure friendly relations between the two countries, chiefly on account of the restless ambition of Alexander, Duke of Albany, the King's brother. The characters and relations of these two men might almost have suggested to Shakespeare those of Prospero and the usurping Duke of Milan in *The Tempest*. For James III was overmuch given to the study of secret and magical arts, and Alexander, backed by a discontented party in the State, scornfully interfered in the affairs of government and made mischief with the English king.

The great nobles, in spite of the law against maintenance, kept up stately retinues in their strong castles, and in practice the countenance and protection of a powerful baron were better worth seeking by lesser people than the protection of the law. We read that the number of retainers who were kept at their lord's expense and wore their lord's 'livery' and badge, varied from sixteen for a knight to two hundred

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and fifty for a duke, through all the grades, baron, viscount, earl, marquess, etc. Hence it came that quarrels easily developed into fights, and that a body of armed men could enable an unsuccessful pleader in a lawsuit to hold his own against any legal decision. An interesting collection of letters written to and from the members of an East Anglian family shows that the instinct for settling any dispute by appeals to force was far stronger than that for finding a peaceable solution. One letter relates how some disappointed relatives, declining to abide by the terms of the will of a deceased squire, invaded the house they thought should have been theirs, and held it against all comers. The writer<sup>1</sup> says: "There be men in Cotton-hall who be strangely disposed towards you, for as I hear say, they make revel there, they melt lead, and break down your bridge, and make that no man go into the place, but on a ladder; and make them as strong as they can. As for Edward Dale (apparently a neighbour) he does not abide at home, they threaten him so because he will send them no victuals. . . . And as for the tenants, they be well disposed to you, except one or two, if that ye will support them in haste, for they may not keep their cattle off the ground longer, and they desire to have your own presence."

In a letter from Mistress Paston to her husband, who was absent in the train of the Duke of Norfolk, she says: "As for tidings we have none good in this country. It was told me that Richard Southwell hath entered in the manor of Hale, the which is the

<sup>1</sup> *The Paston Letters.*

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Lady Boys', and keepeth it with strength with such another fellowship as hath been at Brayston, and wasteth and despoileth all that there is; and the Lady Boys, as it is told me, is to London to complain to the King and the Lords thereof. . . ." It is characteristic of the violence of the times that the good old English word 'fellowship' had become degraded so that it invariably refers to the band of armed retainers employed by some powerful landowner. On the occasion of the holding of the King's courts, which the King sometimes attended in person, the question of disputed ownership would be settled in accordance with justice based upon the evidence. But that by no means assured possession to the suitor if the unsuccessful party was strong enough to take it by force.

In these same letters we have various details showing how important was the matter of liveried retainers on any great occasion. Sir John Paston writes to his brother: "Brother, is it that the King shall come into Norfolk in haste and I wot not whether I may come with him or not; if I come I must make a livery of twenty gowns, which I must pick out by your advice; and as for the cloth for such persons as be in the county, if it might be had there at Norwich or not, I wot not. . . . And whether ye will offer yourself to wait upon my Lord of Norfolk or not, I would ye did that were best to do. . . . He shall have two hundred in a livery blue and tawny, and blue on the left side, and both dark colours."

On another occasion the son, Sir John, writes to his father: "Please you to wit that I am at Lynn

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and am informed by divers persons that the Master of Carbrooke (a Master of Knights Templars) would take rule in the *Mary Talbot* as for captain, and give jackets of his livery to divers persons which he waged (paid) by other men, in the said ship. Wherefore, inasmuch as I have but few soldiers in mine livery here, to strengthen me in that which is the King's commandment, I keep with me your two men Dawbenny and Calle, which I purpose shall sail with me to Yarmouth, for I have purveyed harness for them. . . ." Not infrequently the King had paid visits to the county of Norfolk, usually accompanied by his brother, the Duke of Gloucester. The Queen's relatives held large estates in the county, that of Lord Rivers comprising the district famous in our own day as Sandringham. Toward the close, however, of Edward's reign he journeyed alone, Duke Richard being fully occupied in the North as Warden of the Marches.

## CHAPTER IX: *Troublous Times*

**I**N the year 1483 there were great doings at Westminster and elsewhere; and, however much Caxton may have been engrossed in his work in the Almonry, the stir of the world outside must have reached him. For in the early spring of that year the King lay ill, and before his people had realized his sickness he had passed away. The once active soldier had become enfeebled by self-indulgence and luxurious living, sad and morose through disappointed ambitions, and, seized by fever or ague, he had no strength or spirit wherewith to resist it. His brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was at York, ruling his 'province of the North,' and the young Prince of Wales, aged thirteen, was still at Ludlow Castle, in the charge of Lord Rivers. Certain that he would not recover, King Edward sent for the two bitter rivals, Lord Hastings and the Marquis of Dorset, and implored them to be reconciled and to keep the peace during the minority of his young son Edward.

He then declared that the Prince and his younger son Richard were heirs to his kingdom, and he committed them to the care of the Duke of Gloucester. The lords present were so moved at the sight of his sufferings and misery that they promised all he asked and shook hands in token of amity, though the feud of Hastings and the Marquis of Dorset was too bitter to be thus healed. At the age of forty, after a reign of twenty-two years, Edward IV passed



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away, leaving the English crown once again to a child of tender years.

In his will the King had directed that he was to be buried at Windsor, in the chapel of St George, and that the building and decoration of that chapel should be completed. He bequeathed money for the foundation of a chantry and of a hospital or almshouse for thirteen aged men; he stated that all his just debts were to be paid, and all claims upon his bounty when alive were to be honoured to the full out of his estate. To his second son Richard, already created Duke of Norfolk and Duke of York, he left great estates, and a noble fortune to each of his daughters, of whom the Queen was to be guardian.

Preparations were made for an imposing funeral. For a week the body of the late King lay in state in the Abbey, then, in the midst of a stately procession of peers and men-at-arms, singing monks and clerks, it was borne by slow stages to Windsor and buried in the tomb he had had brought from Mentz some months earlier. Meanwhile messengers had been sent by Lord Hastings, at that time Great Chamberlain, to the heir to the throne at Ludlow and to the Duke of Gloucester at York. He delivered the King's mandate that Richard of Gloucester was the responsible guardian of the young King and of his realm, and begged him to join his royal master at once and to bring him to the capital. So slowly did news travel in those days, and so unprepared was every one concerned, that the new sovereign (to be known as Edward V) left Ludlow Castle only on April 24th,

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nearly a week after his father was buried. So great a company came with him that they made but slow progress and were five days in reaching Northampton, where he was to have been met by his uncle, Duke Richard.

However, plots and counterplots were afoot, and Earl Rivers and Lord Grey desired that the young King should reach London and, if possible, be crowned, before Gloucester could take up his duties as Protector. They hurried on with the royal lad toward London but were overtaken at Stratford, in Essex, by the angry Gloucester. He and his supporters were resolved that none of the Queen's family (the Woodvilles and Greys) should have positions of authority near the young King. Tidings of these doings reached the widowed Queen in her palace at Sheen, and she fled with her younger son Richard and her four daughters into sanctuary at the Abbey of Westminster. The Great Chamberlain had a hard and busy time for some days as rumours flew about; the citizens of London impetuously took sides with one party or the other, and expressed their views by tumultuous gatherings in the streets. Earl Rivers was put under honourable arrest, and the Lord Hastings summoned the Mayor and Corporation to a conference in which he assured them that the Lord Protector and the Lords of the Council were fully alive to their responsibilities, and that the way of safety for plain citizens was to retire to their houses and to pursue their business peacefully. Caxton commented rather severely on the excited instability of the Londoners: "No-wher be these fairer or better bespoken children than

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they in their youth, but at their full riping there is no kernel, no good corn found, but chaffe for the most part."

The disturbed state of things led to the decision to escort the young King Edward to the Tower as his residence during the days before the coronation could take place. It was at once the most dignified and the strongest of the royal residences in London, but it must not be thought of at that date as primarily a prison. Every baron's castle contained dungeons and the royal fortresses were the same, but the Tower was first of all the king's residence. On a day early in May there went forth an imposing procession of barons and men-at-arms, the mayor and the civic officials, to meet the young King. At Hornsey they met the royal cavalcade, and, turning back with it, took part in a grand ceremonial at the Bishop of London's palace, where the archbishops and bishops offered their homage and the mayor and aldermen took their oaths of fealty. Then they rode on toward the Tower, through the crowds of thronging, curious citizens. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, rode bare-headed behind the young Edward, announcing from time to time in a loud voice, "Behold your Prince and Sovereign." The royal lad was of a quiet and timorous disposition, and was probably overwhelmed with the novelty of his new position and the clashing of the nobles' wills and desires even in his very presence. It may well have been that he was conscious of sad foreboding as he entered the gateway of the gloomy fortress. For the Queen's party, inspired by her determined and restless ambition, was bent upon

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having Gloucester's Protectorate cease at the King's coronation; and desired that she herself, with her relatives, should become his advisers and guardians. To thwart this the Protector demanded the guardianship of the King's brother, Prince Richard, since he was next heir to the throne; and he, being supported in his claim by the two archbishops, the Queen after a stormy scene gave way.

The meeting between the two brothers took place at the Bishop of London's palace, and there they spent some days together while preparations for the coronation were made. Harsh doings were afoot, too, for Lord Hastings, chief leader of the Queen's party, had been accused of treason and summarily executed without even the formality of a trial. Rumours of this and other disturbing news no doubt reached the young princes as they practised their parts and were instructed in their duties for the great ceremony. The coronation was to take place on June 24th and the meeting of Parliament on the next day. For the opening the Lord Chancellor (the Bishop of Lincoln) prepared an impressive sermon upon the text, "Listen, O Isles, unto me and hearken, ye people, from afar: the Lord hath called me." This, though it was never delivered, has been preserved among our records, and strange and quaint are some of the images and turns of speech. "It be undoubted that all the habitation of man be either in land or in water. Then if there be any sureness or permanence in this world such as may be found out of heaven it is rather in the Isles and lands environed with water than in the See or in any great *Rivers*."

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Just before the Sunday of the coronation the Lord Protector postponed the intended meeting of Parliament, and then followed it up with the announcement that the coronation was to be deferred till November. The rest of the grim story is told so effectively and with such mastery by Shakespeare in his *Tragedy of King Richard the Third* that most readers can think of the Duke of Gloucester only as deformed without and a monster of cruelty within. He was not, however, accepted as such in his own time ; the political party supporting him appear to have believed that through an earlier secret marriage of Edward IV his children had no legal claim to the throne. This, if justified, made Edward's brother Richard the next heir. We read that, in order to sway the public mind, on the very Sunday which was to have seen the coronation a political sermon was preached at Paul's Cross by the brother of the Lord Mayor. Taking as his text a verse from the Book of Wisdom, "The brood of the ungodly shall perish . . . and shall not strike deep root," the preacher declared that there were grave doubts as to the right of the young Prince to be crowned King Edward V, and that the Protector himself was in that case the rightful heir.

We may well imagine that Caxton was among the crowd of listeners, which numbered "peers and clerks and goodly gentlemen and a great concourse of citizens," and we can picture his grave face among those of the startled hearers. We read that they were too much disturbed and surprised to receive the news with the cries of welcome which had been expected. However, the next day the Lord Mayor and city

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aldermen, the Duke of Buckingham and others, went to Baynard's Castle where Richard was residing and craved audience. They begged him to take not merely the protection of the realm but the throne itself.

It is a curious illustration of the slowness and uncertainty of communication in Caxton's day, that the Protector's mandate postponing the opening of Parliament failed to reach most of its members in time, so that they were on the spot on June 26th, when "all the lords spiritual and temporal of this realm" accompanied him to Westminster. There they presented him with an address petitioning him to receive the crown, and on July 4th he was proclaimed king.

Two days later the coronation took place, the ceremony being performed by the aged Cardinal-Archbishop Bouchier, a fortnight after the date when he was to have crowned the young Prince Edward. This great ecclesiastic was one of the most striking figures of the time. Himself of royal descent (for he was the great-grandson of Edward III), it had been his lot to hold the highest positions in Church and State. At the age of twenty-nine he was made Bishop of Worcester; ten years later he was translated to the wealthy and important See of Ely; twelve years after this he became Archbishop of Canterbury and soon after Lord Chancellor. This was in 1454, when the Duke of York was Protector, but when in the next year King Henry recovered from his malady, and Queen Margaret held power, the Great Seal was taken from him. At the defeat of the Lancastrians the Archbishop crowned Edward king, but he held aloof from political life

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for many years. He was nominated cardinal in 1467 and seldom took part in any but Church functions afterward. He built himself a castle-palace and was distinguished throughout Europe as the patron of learning and the friend of scholars, keeping a splendid hospitality and maintaining a stately household. We are told that it was at his banquets that there first appeared in England the small sweet grapes of Corinth, familiar to us as 'currants.'

Twice in his life the Cardinal-Archbishop was said to have 'prevented a revolution' by his tact and calm judgment. One occasion was when the victorious Duke of York entered the House of Lords after the battle of Northampton and advanced toward the steps of the throne as though about to make for the seat. The Archbishop advanced with a courtly obeisance, saying, "Will not my Lord of York go and pay his respects to the King?" The Duke was taken aback and became so conscious that the feeling of the assembly was not with him that he retired. The second occasion contrasts strangely with this. Instead of administering a rebuff, Bouchier, by his action, established Edward's position at a critical time. In 1470 when the King's secret marriage with Lady Elizabeth Grey offended many of the nobility, it was very doubtful whether the citizens of London would support him or not. The Archbishop made great preparations for an impressive ceremony and, surrounded by several bishops and the Cathedral clergy, awaited the King on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral and gave him his episcopal blessing.

Now once more he was to hold a prominent position

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in the great events of the time. The curious eyes of the Londoners were again to be feasted with pageants and processions and ceremonies. From Baynard's Castle to Westminster Hall, from the Hall to the Abbey, where the coronation took place, from the Abbey to St Paul's—and amid welcoming shouts at last—rode the new King. Everything that could add to the impressiveness of the occasion was done, but there is a grim suggestiveness in the fact that pages and heralds were wearing the splendid suits prepared for the coronation of the young Edward, and scarcely could the symbols of the intended King be hidden beneath the hastily-prepared cognizance of Richard. The State records bear the entry, "Eight thousand boars made and wrought upon fustian at twenty shillings a thousand." Later tradition had it that the young Prince Edward walked with his brother in the great procession, but it is believed that this was not so. There were present, however, all the magnates of the land—the Duke of Buckingham, a resplendent figure; the Duke of Norfolk, and the Duke of Suffolk, many bishops, the Cardinal-Primate, and, apparently, some of the members of the late king's family. Another entry gives, "For the Lady Bridget, one of the daughters of King Edward IV, being sick, two long pillows of fustian stuffed with down."

The Duke of Norfolk was proclaimed High Constable of England for the ceremony, and the haughty Buckingham High Steward of England; his office it was to bear the King's train in the Hall and in the Abbey. He himself in the procession through London



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was "dressed in a suit of blue velvet embroidered with gold in imitation of fire." His horse was caparisoned with the same material, the rich trappings falling to the ground and being supported by gold tassels borne by footmen gorgeously attired. Before the King rode the High Constable, bearing a Sword unsheathed.

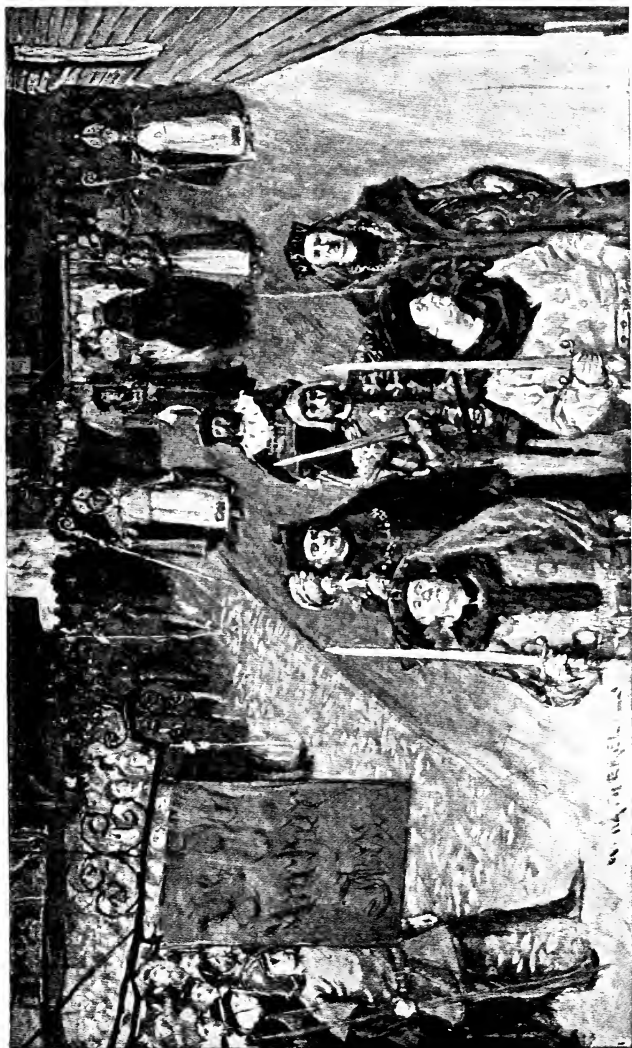
The Cardinal-Archbishop, in full pontifical vestments, walked in the procession. Following him and his chaplains came the Earl of Huntington bearing the gilt spurs. Then came a gorgeous throng of nobles with the royal insignia. One earl bore the staff of St Edward, the emblem of justice, another a pointless sword, the emblem of mercy ; a peer carried the mace, the Duke of Suffolk the sceptre, the Duke of Norfolk the royal crown, and his son, the Earl of Surrey, bore the Sword of State.

From Westminster Hall to the Abbey the King walked beneath a silken canopy, borne by the peer-wardens of the Cinque Ports, supported by a bishop on either side. Immediately behind him came the Queen, wearing a diamond coronet, and followed by peers who bore a rod crowned with a dove, and the consort's crown. The Queen's train-bearer was Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, whose son Henry, then absent in France, was destined to become the founder of another royal house. When the coronation ceremony was over the privileged few in the Abbey saw, for a few moments, King Richard III wearing the crown and holding in either hand the sceptre and the orb. Beside him stood his Queen, crowned, and holding her dove-crowned rod.

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The great banquet in Westminster Hall rivalled in magnificence the most splendid of Edward IV's functions. The new King was in his element as the centre of the display. Seated at a raised table, the Queen on his left and the Cardinal-Archbishop on his right, he was served by nobles from vessels of gold, his consort from vessels of gilt, and the Cardinal from silver. At other tables sat all the great barons who supported his claim, except those who, in their official positions, served at the banquet. It was the coveted prerogative of the Lord Mayor of London to serve the royal pair with a golden goblet of sweet wine and a vial of water, and afterward to retain the vessels as his own. Midway through the banquet the King's champion rode into the Hall, fully armoured, and flung down his gauntlet, challenging to fight any man who disputed Richard's title. As the metal glove rang on the floor the Hall resounded with cries of "God save King Richard! King Richard! King Richard!"

But the central figure of that stately scene, however magnificently vested and served without, was bitten with sore misgivings within. He had good reason to know the lowly knees, bent heads, and lusty shouts might accompany disloyal or discontented spirits, and we read that he was especially doubtful of Lord Stanley's allegiance. "When the feast was finished the King sent home all the Lords into their counties that would depart, except the Lord Stanley." He had sought to clear from his path all the powerful adversaries of his claim, and during the very days of his triumphal progress and corona-



The Coronation Procession of Richard III

W. Hatherell



## *Troublous Times*

tion Earl Rivers and Lord Richard Grey were put to death in far Pontefract Castle (the 'Pomfret' of *King Richard II*).

In the succeeding days the King set about such steps of precaution as might be taken. He sent special messengers to the nobles in charge of the garrisons at Guisnes and Calais, releasing his subjects in those towns from their allegiance to King Edward V and demanding its transfer to himself, "that good laws, reason, and the concorde and assent of the lordes and commons of the royaume have ordained to reign upon the people, our said soverayne lord King Richard the IIJde." He issued a proclamation enjoining peace upon his people and charging the judges and magistrates to administer justice. He visited the court of King's Bench and sat in judgment because he considered "it was the chiefest duty of the King to administer the laws."

He made his young son, Edward, Lieutenant of Ireland, with the Earl of Kildare as Deputy, and promised always to guard 'the weal of Ireland.' He dismissed his North-country troops who had followed him to London, and set out upon a royal progress through his realm. Apparently the beginning of the journey was by water. Leaving London, the royal barges went on to Greenwich, Sheen Park being one of the royal residences, then to Reading, and on to Oxford. There the King and Queen were the honoured guests of Magdalen College, and many academic festivities took place. His next stay was at Woodstock, the old forest-palace of the Angevin sovereigns, which had been restored in the midst

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of a 'chase' by Edward IV. These lands Richard ordered to be thrown open, thus winning the delighted gratitude of the people.

At Gloucester, the city of his title, at Tewkesbury, at Worcester, and at Warwick similar splendid scenes took place. As the last-named castle was the home of his wife in her girlhood, the celebrations there were especially magnificent; there he received greetings from the sovereigns of Spain, France, and Burgundy by their ambassadors. At York itself, the centre of his old northern province, very notable preparations were made to receive worthily him "who had been their governor and was now their King." The streets were decorated, the houses hung with arras and tapestry work, and a procession met the royal visitors on their way to the cathedral, with the mayor and the civic dignitaries clad in 'red gowns,' the nobles and gentlemen in blue velvet. Everywhere shone emblazoned on waving banners the 'Boar' cognizance, and all retainers had new suits of fustian and leather to do honour to the occasion.

Gifts were offered to the sovereign and his consort in caskets of gold; it is said that as much as £5000 was thus presented. The King had declined similar 'benevolences' from the burgesses of London and Gloucester, protesting that he "desired their hearts, not their purses," but he appears to have accepted the bounty of the northern capital. All this must have much impressed the Spanish envoy, who had accompanied the royal procession from Warwick.

At York, too, the King met his son, Prince Edward, who had been sent with a retinue of knights from

## *Troublous Times*

Middleham Castle, where he was being educated in the household of its noble owner. There was a grand ceremony of knighting the young Prince, and he was created Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester on the same day. He was but ten years old, three years younger than his hapless cousin Edward, then imprisoned in the Tower. Still another Edward was there, and was knighted on the occasion—this was the eldest son of the Duke of Clarence. Several of the young sons of the nobles present were also knighted.

The courtly ceremonies were barely over when King Richard had occasion to turn his mind to sterner matters. Although it seemed that the strongest party of nobles was on his side and desired him to hold the throne, there were plenty of disaffected people and malcontents. Among these were some who had openly espoused Richard's cause, and chief of such was the powerful Duke of Buckingham. To him came, openly or secretly, all who desired to upset the newly-established order of things. The ex-Queen Elizabeth, from her sanctuary in the Abbey precincts of Westminster, had many sympathizers, and was prepared to plot with any party that would seek to remove Richard.

A certain Welsh physician, acting as go-between for the Countess of Richmond and the royal widow, arranged a marriage between the Princess Elizabeth or her sister Cicely, and the young Henry, Duke of Richmond, then in honourable exile at the court of Brittany. When rumours of wicked deeds in the Tower were bandied about, there were insurrections

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in various parts of the country, and the Duke of Buckingham put himself at the head of the most powerful body of rebels. At the same time Henry of Richmond's hosts, the Duke and Duchess of Brittany, gave him substantial help in the form of a small fleet of ships, and with these he set sail for England.

There were many people he knew who would be prepared to recognize and support his claim to the English throne if he showed himself able to make a good attack, but without this prudence would dictate a waiting policy. There could be no feeling of passionate loyalty anywhere, such as at some periods in history has brought about changes of rulers. Edward IV had not been able to evoke it, nor could his unknown young heir; still less could his unscrupulous brother, now on the throne. Certainly such a sentiment could not be strongly felt toward the Earl of Richmond, even though he could claim descent from King Edward III.

When, as he was turning southward, news of the insurrections and of Buckingham's part in fomenting them reached King Richard, he took such energetic steps and found such effective support that the risings were crushed and their leader seized and imprisoned. If not 'the stars in their courses,' at least the elements were against the insurgents, for a terrific storm of rain and hail and tempestuous gales made marching and fighting impossible. Impossible, too, it was in the face of prudence for the remnants of the little fleet from Brittany to land Henry of Richmond on the shores he wished to claim.



## *Troublous Times*

Two of the seven vessels reached the safe expanse of Poole harbour ('one of the finest natural harbours in the world'), and the shallow draught of the fifteenth-century vessels found no inconvenience in the sand-banks at its entrance. But the test-question, "Friends and helpers, or not?" brought no eager response, and as the tempest lulled Henry sailed away—to return, however, to some purpose later.

The King's vengeance on Buckingham's treachery was sharp and complete. He was beheaded on Sunday, the 2nd November, somewhat less than a month after his open declaration of rebellion, in front of Salisbury Cathedral. Although this prompt action effectually checked the rising, it led to the King's undoing. Popular sentiment began to turn against a sovereign who showed himself ruthless in anger and vengeance. The storm which had aided his purpose began to be interpreted as a visitation of God for the murder of the young princes, and the disastrous overflow of the Severn was known as 'Buckingham's water'; thus linking the fallen noble with the fallen princes. An eclipse occurring at about the same time moved the people to an anxious inquiry as to whether the deeds of King or nation provoked the wrath of God. But for the moment men were not united enough to take action against a sovereign so ready in resource, so unflinching in action, and so resolute in punishment, and by the beginning of December King Richard entered London in peace; all leaders of revolt were executed or outlawed and their partisans were awed into silence. Confiscation of property of course accompanied

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death or exile, so that he could win new adherents by grants and gifts.

Yet, perplexingly enough, cruel and relentless as Richard could be, in some instances he showed himself indulgent. One such example was in his treatment of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond. She was now married to her third husband, Lord Stanley, and in him Richard placed such confidence that, while formally confiscating the titles and possessions of the Countess, he named her husband as their guardian. A writer of the time remarks: "Had not his mercye exceeded his crueltye his safety had been more assured, and his name (peradventure) not soe much subject to obloquy."

It is impossible to say to what extent these turbulent episodes interfered with the ordinary life of the people, especially with that of those who, like Caxton, lived in the shelter of a power and authority not greatly affected by isolated disturbances of the time. In the next chapter we shall see something of his connexion with the new monarch and his court.

## CHAPTER X: *The 'Unpopular King'*

THE year 1484 was a busy one for King Richard. The courtly and civic ceremonies and the loyal observances which had attended his assumption of the crown were over ; over, too, was the pronouncing of sentences of death or banishment with which he visited antagonists who had thwarted him. It was the season for work, and in this the King showed himself indefatigable. His first and only Parliament was summoned for January 23rd ; to it came between thirty and forty peers and about a hundred members of the House of Commons. The clergy assembled apart, in Convocation, and we read that in their first meeting they voted a liberal subsidy to the King. The sermon preached by the Chancellor at the opening of Parliament was upon the text, " We have many members in one body," and stress was laid upon the duty of governments to seek the welfare and happiness of the people.

The Commons, no doubt under pressure, elected as their Speaker, William Catesby, who was a retainer of the King's household when he was Duke of Gloucester. Those were the days when the Commons had as yet attempted no legislation, but humbly, by petitions to the King, asked for redress of grievances. Their first work in this session was the consideration of the Bill introduced by the Peers, stating the claims of Richard to the throne and to the title of king. They gave it their approval and followed it up with a grant of tunnage and poundage (*i.e.* the import

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duties) and the tax on wool, for life. The reason for this indiscreetly generous provision was the King's own announcement that 'benevolences' and forced loans were illegal, and that he could never have recourse to them.

Most of the petitions submitted by the House of Commons to the King concerned trade and commerce, the removal of restrictions and the promoting of free intercourse between merchants. One clause in the promise granted was to the effect that "no statutes shall be interpreted as being a hindrance to any artificer, or merchant stranger, of what nation or country he be, bringing into this realm, or selling by retail or otherwise any manner of books, written or emprinted." We may imagine the interest with which the quiet worker and lover of literature in the Almonry of Westminster heard of this and saw the widening range of his industry.

The last item of parliamentary business was the taking of the oath to secure the succession of the young Prince Edward, son of Richard, and, within a month after its assembling, Parliament was dismissed. The King, meanwhile, was attending carefully to continental affairs. He made a treaty with the Duke of Brittany, who thereupon bade farewell to his refugee, Henry Richmond; he recognized the papal authority in ecclesiastical matters and dispatched two bishops to convey his 'homage and filial duty' to the Pontiff at Rome; he sent an embassy to the court of Burgundy, whose Dowager-Duchess Margaret in her widowhood had a royal court of her own and seemed to hold a kind of sovereignty over Flanders.

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France had offered shelter to Henry Richmond; hence Richard was warily watching France. Thither had fled, too, more than one member of the noble houses whom he was minded to destroy. But apart from the wreaking of his vengeance upon foes, in which he followed old familiar custom and precedent, the King appeared to have set himself to govern well. The great anxiety and distraction was ever the fear of invasion by Henry Richmond, aided as he might be by some continental sovereign, and welcomed by disappointed subjects at home. In view of this Richard set himself to increase the navy, and, by granting privileges to merchants, to obtain command of further ships in case of need.

But misfortune dogged him. In the spring the young Prince of Wales died, leaving the King with no 'heirs of his body' to succeed him. True, there were nephews; there were the young son of his brother, the late Duke of Clarence, and the young son of his sister who had married the Duke of Suffolk. He named the latter, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, as heir-presumptive. In spite of Richard's care and his designs to win popularity by giving up several of the royal forests which his predecessor had enclosed, men's minds were turning more and more toward a successor of maturer years, so that Richard could not rely upon any strength of national feeling to oppose the action of impatient partisans of the house of Lancaster. He was conscious of evil portents, and his past cruelties might well have made him afraid. Perhaps, too, besides the promise of coming troubles there reached his ears the popular sentiment which

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declared that he was not himself ruling the kingdom but that upstart favourites controlled him. The rude doggerel has come down to us which declared that :

The Cat, the Rat, and Lovel the Dog,  
Rule all England under the Hog.

The names gibbeted thus are Catesby, Earl Ratcliffe, and Lord Lovel, with a punning reference to the hound in the Lovel coat of arms, and to the King's cognizance of the boar, which was blazoned everywhere.

Soon after the death of Prince Edward the Queen became ill, and in less than a year the King had lost both his heir and his wife. In his desperate resolve to maintain his hold on the throne he proposed to marry the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of his brother, the late King. But even the least scrupulous of his advisers warned him against such a perilous step. The rumour of the King's intention turned many of his subjects against him, and confirmed others in their fear that his love of power could make him forget all claims of honour or of conscience.

While the gathering clouds were heralding the close of a reign, the least known and honoured of any in our history, many quiet workers were pursuing their way and trusting only not to be mixed up in any of the broils which threatened to rage about the throne. The plots and intrigues, their authors and objects, are either forgotten or covered with a cloak of discredit ; some few books, however, sent out from the Red Pale at Westminster during those gloomy months are among our greatest national treasures.

In an early chapter we pictured the visit of King



Richard III  
G. Demain Hammond





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Edward IV and his brothers to the Almonry ; and with them the silent meditative youth, Richard of Gloucester. We may imagine as companion picture a later visit with that same Richard as the central figure. For literature was one of the interests of the King when he permitted himself to shake off the cares of State ; and the new method of producing books was under his direct patronage. In the preceding year he had on more than one occasion taken to Westminster the pale, sickly boy whose death had now disappointed his hopes. The Queen, too, had accompanied him, and had been presented by Caxton with a copy of his French and English phrase-book, first printed three years earlier in the new clear type with which he was gradually replacing the crooked characters of first books. This phrase-book was a kind of short compendium of general knowledge in French and English set in parallel columns, and it was evidently designed to be committed to memory in both languages. Some instructive comparisons of fifteenth century and modern spelling are suggested as we study a reproduction of Caxton's booklet.

### FRENSSHE

La Grace de saint esperit  
Veut enluminer les cures  
De ceulx qui le aprendront  
Et nous doiust perseuerance  
En bonnes operaciones  
Et apres ceste vie transitorie  
La pardurable joye & glorie.

### ENGLISSH

The grace of the holy ghooſt  
Wylle enlighten the hertes  
Of them that ſhall lerne it  
And us gyve perseuerance  
In good werkes,  
And after this lyf transitorie  
The euerlaſtyng joy and glorie.

Thus, after the devout fashion of mediæval times, the little book reads. No punctuation aids the reading,

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but it is one of the first books in which the printer is careful to begin the lines evenly. The arrival in England of an enterprising Lithuanian exile, John Lettou, who established a printing-press in London in 1480, provided with the clearer Italian type and fitted so that the appearance of the page was neater than those of the Mentz printers, made Caxton look to his laurels. Hence, on the King's visit in 1484, the raftered chamber would be crowded up with precious piles of paper thick and heavy ; and trays of metal type would be continually increased and weeded out. All the appliances for making the type would be there too.

By this time, too, Caxton had two or three permanent helpers, one of whom was an enthusiast like his master, and, like him, destined to become famous. This was Wynken de Worde, a native of Belgium, the form of whose name suggests the conflicting influences of France and Germany on the Netherlands at that time. He seems to have been a most efficient worker, not only carrying out Caxton's improvements but also suggesting others. One such, attributed to de Worde, was the introduction of a larger-sized page, and another, the printing of two pages at once.

Although many of the books printed by Caxton are undated we find that some at least of the important ones which appeared during the brief reign of Richard III are clearly marked. One of these was the *Confessio Amantis* of the poet Gower, friend and servant of an earlier King Richard. The double-columned text has at the end :

“ Enprynted at Westmestre by me || Willyam

## *The 'Unpopular King'*

Caxton and fynysshed the II || day of Septembre the fyrst yere of the || regne of Kyng Richard the thyrd / the || yere of our lord a thousand / CCCC / lxxxiiij."

The long slanting line which took the place of the familiar comma was the only punctuation, and this was not allowed to appear in the text. The absence of a standard spelling and a clear and simple method of writing dates is shown by a comparison of this ending with that of another printed in the same year. This was a treatise by the Chevalier de la Tour Landry for the 'Enseignement' of his daughters; probably this was an ingenious fiction covering the production of a 'Book of Manners' which seems oddly to anticipate Lord Chesterfield's 'Letters' to his son. The closing page bears the inscription:

"Here fynysshed the booke / whiche the Knight of the Toure ma || de to the enseygnement and techyng of his doughters transla || ted oute of Frenssh in to our maternall Englysshe tongue by || me William Caxton / whiche book was ended & fynysshed the || fyrst day of Juyn / the yere of oure lord M CCCClxxxiiij.

"And enprynted at Westmynstre the last day of Janyuer the fyrst yere of the regne of kynge Rychard the thyrd."

The parallel lines showing where in Caxton's print the line of text ended, remind us how in all early printed books, and while paper was scarce and dear, there was no convention that monosyllabic words should not be divided or that others should be broken at their syllables. The indifferent use of *i* and *y* suggests that thus the failure of one or other letter

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in the supplies of type was got over, as was also the occasional dropping of the final *e*. The date was always something to struggle with in the centuries before the complete introduction of the Arabic symbols. Chaucer had mentioned the 'figures newe' which he had seen in his travels, but they were, in Caxton's time and for many years to come, mysterious, occult, and believed to belong to witchcraft.

Caxton's preface to this book shows his high opinion of it: "I advise every gentleman or woman having children, desiring them to be virtuously brought forth, to get and have this book, to the end that they may learn to govern them virtuously in this present life." He also says that he undertook to translate and print it at "the request of a noble lady."

But the largest and most exacting of his productions during these years was his illustrated translation from French and Latin manuscripts of the *Golden Legend*. It consisted of the narratives of the lives and miracles of the Saints, and to the mediæval mind it was, as Caxton termed it, "the mirror of the regime and government of the body and of the soul." He found the work so onerous that he was more than once 'in a manner half desperate' to give up the task. But it was undertaken at the request of his honoured patron, the Earl of Arundel, who encouraged him to proceed by promising to take several copies of the finished work. He is said also to have given Caxton a small pension, or annuity, which, according to old custom, was not in money but in kind, and consisted of venison presented twice a year.

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At the end of the book is printed :

"Whiche werke || I have accomplisshed at the commaun || dmente and requeste of the noble and || puyssaunt erle and my special good || lord Wylliam erle of arondel || and have fynysshed it at Westmestre the twenty || day of Nouembre the yere of our lord || M CCCC lxxxiiij & the fyrst yere || of the reygne of Kyng Rychard the || thyrd. By me Wylliam Caxton."

To do honour to his patron Caxton introduced the Arundel coat of arms and motto, a device which anticipated the long roll of punning or rebus cognizances for which the English peerage is famous. A running horse with the legend, "My Truste is," on his flank invites the reader to interpret it as "My Truste is Fast." Caxton's own device, which he placed in all his later books, has been supposed to bear a hidden meaning ; the peculiar symbol between his initials had the effect of making the whole appear to be an unusually elaborate monogram, although apparently it is really the overlapping Arabic figures 74.

As in the case of many of the greatest men in history, very little is known of Caxton's private life. The man is enshrined in his work. But careful search has resulted in a few details from which a scanty harvest of personal interests has been gathered. During his residence abroad it seems that Caxton had married a Flemish maiden bearing the favourite name of Maud, and that, when he returned to England, he brought with him a wife and a daughter. He may have met his bride at Cologne while he was

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laboriously mastering the new art, for it is unlikely that he could have married when in the household of the Duchess Margaret, and in the earlier years, when he was head of the English house of the Woolmen's Guild in Bruges, he was a member of a community living under rules which forbade anything but a common life. But in the simple burgher households of Cologne and Mentz something of the conditions of his youthful apprenticeship in London would exist, so that, when he returned to England, we may suppose him to have brought with him his wife and a daughter. In later years there were apparently three children, two sons and a daughter, in the house behind the Red Pale.

For some time a tradition existed that Caxton's father spent his last years in his son's house and was buried from there in the churchyard of St Margaret's, Westminster. But the name was not an uncommon one, in its form as used by the famous printer or in the variant 'Causton,' and on the face of it there is no great likelihood that the Kentish farmer would in his old age leave the family homestead for life in the house of a travelled and stranger-son engrossed in a novel and busy profession. In the year 1484 Caxton interrupted his work on the *Golden Legend* to issue a Broadside, or single sheet, of *Death-Bed Prayers*. Hence it is suggested that in that year his father died, and that Caxton's mourning visit to the Kentish home impelled him to turn his skill to the production of something of solemn import befitting the occasion. The Broadside would appeal not so much to the ordinary townsmen as to the

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clergy, whose duty led them to the bed-sides of the dying. While all that issued from Caxton's Press is valuable and rare, this single sheet, printed on one side only, exists in the form of one copy, which is carefully treasured in a private library.

Though we are able to know but few details of Caxton's domestic life, there remain some interesting particulars of what may be termed his civic, or municipal, activities. It was natural that an able Englishman who had returned from a long sojourn and responsible work abroad, and was engaged, under patronage of the great, and even of the Court, in the newest industry of the day, should take part in the government and control of the affairs of his parish. In the records of the church of St Margaret, Westminster, Caxton is mentioned as among those who were present at the audit of the warden's accounts. The entry is evidently by a clerk: "In the presence of John Randolf, squyer, Richard Umpay, gentleman, Thomas Burgeys, John Kendall, notary, William Caxton . . . with other paryshyns."

Similar records kept by the Mercers' Company show that Caxton remained an honoured member of the Guild of Woolmen, whose chief English staple was at Westminster near the steel yard of the Hanse merchants. Once a year at least this guild, like most of the mediæval trade societies, held a general audit of its accounts. On the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was kept as a general holiday, a festive gathering of the members shared in the discussion of the society's prosperity,

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and the excellent dinner which followed it. The entries one year cover two long pages, and include :

A tonne of wyne . . . . .	vjs	iid
John Drayton, chief cok for his reward	xxvs	
For the hire of xxiiij doseyn erthen		
pottes for ale and wyne . . . . .	iiijs	
For iiij players for their labour . . . . .	xiis	xd
For rushes . . . . .	ijs	iiijd

From these curious old accounts we learn that swans, herons, capons, 'chekens,' 'gese,' and 'conyes' furnished the table, besides many kinds of fish, including 'turbut,' oysters, and 'sea pranys.' The habit of heavy feeding for which Englishmen were noted was apparently a civic characteristic even in the fifteenth century. A later entry in those same pages shows that considerable roughness or clumsiness distinguished the guests, the 'cok,' or his assistants: "For erthen pottes broken at the same feast . . . vijs viiijd."

With the passing away of the year 1484 (which we must remember ended in March) the murmurs of the coming storm grew so loud that not only King and Court, nobles and political plotters were aware of it, but also peaceful citizens and workers who would fain have been absorbed in their own business.



## CHAPTER XI: *The Passing of the Old Order*

**B**EFORE entering upon a description of the next struggle for the English crown a few words must be said about one of the most distinguished and important personalities of the time, Margaret, Countess of Richmond, who, when we saw her last, was assisting at the coronation of Richard III's consort. This lady, one of the many Margarets in our history and especially of the fifteenth century, is perhaps the most graciously noted of all. She was of royal lineage and a great heiress by birth. When, at the age of four, she lost her father, John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, governor of Aquitaine and Normandy in the reign of Henry VI, she became the King's ward. Henry bestowed the office of guardian upon William de la Pole, afterward Duke of Suffolk, and he enjoyed the revenues of her estates until his impeachment and death. One of the charges against him was that he had arranged a secret marriage between his young son and the Lady Margaret, and indeed many great nobles were anxious to obtain her hand for their sons.

When she was only eight years old King Henry had her betrothed to his half-brother, Edmund Tudor; and in obedience to a vision which came to her after asking for Divine guidance, she married him when she was fourteen. During the ten years since her father's death she had lived under the guardianship of her mother (also a Margaret) a daughter of the great house of Beauchamp. Under her care and training

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the young heiress acquired a wonderful amount of learning and developed a most devoted love and reverence for knowledge and goodness. She was a woman grown when Caxton's first books came out, but we may imagine the interest and delight with which she would see the fruits of the new invention.

On her marriage in 1455 the Lady Margaret lived at Pembroke Castle, a possession of the Tudor family. Her husband's father, Owen Tudor, is one of the romantic characters of our history. For gallantry at Agincourt he became an esquire of the chamber to the soldier-King Henry V, and at his sovereign's death was given the same post to the baby-prince. The widowed Queen Katharine showed him further honour and soon secretly married him. Their eldest son it was who married Lady Margaret Beaufort.

A short time before the birth of their first child the Earl died and the Countess Margaret was a widow before she was sixteen years old; she then again became a royal ward. For some years she lived quietly at Pembroke Castle, devoting herself to the care and upbringing of her little son, well content to be out of the turmoil of political strife. The boy, who was afterward to become the astute, calculating Henry VII, in no way resembled either his gentle, generous mother or his eager, impetuous father, though his great ability and strength of character may have been inherited from the Countess without her beauty of temperament.

In the early years of the Civil War the Countess married Sir Henry Stafford, son of the Duke of Buckingham. But this was insufficient protection against

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the disfavour of the new sovereign when the Yorkist leader became King Edward IV. Partly on account of her Lancastrian birth, but also in vengeance for Jasper Tudor's (her brother-in-law) resolute support of Henry VI, Edward IV attainted the little Henry Tudor and seized his heritage, bestowing it upon his own brother, the Duke of Clarence. The lad and his mother were placed in the charge of Sir William Herbert, a prominent supporter of the house of York, and they appeared to have lived in Pembroke Castle as before—but now as prisoners of state.

Then in the whirligig of political fortune the success of the Lancastrians, with the aid of the powerful Earl of Warwick (aptly enough called the King-maker), and the flight of Edward IV to the Burgundian Court, restored to the Countess Margaret and her son their forfeited inheritance and position. An interesting event in the life of the young Henry of Richmond was his visit to the Court in London with his uncle, Jasper Tudor. There he was kindly welcomed by the failing Henry VI, and some say that the dispirited monarch foretold for the boy the throne of England. Within a few months the daring return of Edward of York, and his victorious encounters with Queen Margaret's army, again threw the Tudor family into a position of danger. Jasper carried his nephew, now aged fourteen, with him in his flight to France, and the lonely mother lived secluded in a house belonging to her mother's family, the Beauchamps, in the Midland shires. Here she sought, and undoubtedly found, consolation in living the life of a religious. Long hours were spent in prayer and meditation, material

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comfort was shunned, severe penances embraced, and the needs and sorrows of the sick and poor made her one care. The fact that she was the wife of Sir Henry Stafford seems hardly to have affected her life. Her position and possessions gave her a dangerous political importance which she had to bear in her own person. Her marriage with Stafford united two great Lancastrian houses, and perhaps this gave some security to both, unless any ardent members engaged in political plots. A popular description of the wealth and position of the Stafford (Buckingham) family was that there were as many liveries with 'Stafford Knots' as there were with the 'ragged staffs' (Warwick's cognizance). Sir Henry in his will left his whole fortune to his 'beloved wife,' except for a few personal bequests of coursers, a 'grizzled horse' and 'harness' to his own friends. To the exiled Henry of Richmond he left his 'trapper and four new horse harness of velvet.'

These, and other legacies of the time, remind us of the extent to which wealth consisted in lavish finery, rich wearing apparel, fine animals, massive hangings and 'harness,' and to a lesser extent in choice weapons, curiously embossed and ornamented.

The widowed Countess again connected herself in marriage with a great noble, and this certainly, as her previous one possibly, was in response to courtly and political pressure. Her third husband was Lord Stanley, chief adviser and personal friend of Edward IV. The wedding took place when this monarch, worn out with alternate war-work and self-indulgence, lay ill and despondent, tormented by painful memories and oppressed

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by gloomy fears for the future. Lord Stanley was the steward of the King's household, and his wife, of necessity, became a leading figure in the empty, noisy Court life of the time. She was, however, so much the great lady, the cultivated, adaptable woman of the world, that she accommodated herself to her changed life, finding support, perhaps, in her growing hopes for the future of her son. He, at the Court of Brittany, was a centre for many far-sighted malcontents, and developed a resolute and patient attitude which greatly helped to bring about his future triumph.

Two years after the Countess Margaret's marriage King Edward IV died, and the Protector, Duke Richard, suspecting Stanley's loyalty, imprisoned him in the Tower. When, however, his path clear, Gloucester had secured for himself the crown, he restored the nobleman to his position at Court. Thus it came about that the Countess Margaret was train-bearer to the new Queen at her coronation. But her mind must have been full of the future possibilities ; in the eyes of many Richard was a mere usurper ; Margaret's own descent from the princely John of Gaunt gave her a better claim to the crown, and she herself certainly believed that, with the accession of a sovereign with a stronger title and a cleaner record, happier times would ensue for the nation.

To accomplish this she resolved to waive her own claim, and, transferring it to her beloved son, to accomplish his marriage with the Princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the late King ; thus she hoped to merge rivalries and dissensions in a national peace. The old historian, Polydore Virgil, writes : " She being

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a wise woman, after the slaughter of King Edward's children was known, began to hope well of her son's fortune ; supposing that that deed would without doubt prove for the benefit of the commonwealth, if it might chance the blood of King Henry VI and King Edward should be intermingled by affinity, and so two pernicious factions, by conjoining of both houses, be utterly taken away."

She soon won to her way of thinking her connexion by marriage, Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, and he entered enthusiastically into the plan. The young Princess, who was noted for her beauty and spirit, was with the Queen-Dowager ' in Sanctuary ' at Westminster, close to the abode of Caxton. In a suite of stone chambers over the archway looking into the Abbey enclosure, and at right angles to the long buildings of the Almonry, the widow of Edward IV waited and watched and hoped.

The eager, ill-natured attempt was destined to failure, and, as we have seen, the Duke of Buckingham was executed for treason.<sup>1</sup> Richard's vengeance fell heavily, too, upon the Countess. Her estates were confiscated, her titles and dignities taken from her, her son was attainted of high treason, and she was ordered to be confined in a castle belonging to her husband, Lord Stanley, and prevented from communicating in any way with her son. So undaunted was she, however, that in spite of watch and ward she actively employed herself in preparing Richmond's way, enlisting supporters, supplying stores of arms and provisions in readiness for his coming, and in-

<sup>1</sup> Chapter ix.



The Queen-Dowager in Sanctuary at Westminster  
W. Hatherell





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spiring every one with confidence in the justice and bounden success of the attempt.

Soon after the middle of May King Richard set off to the North, leaving Lord Lovel in command of a fleet of ships to watch the coast round Southampton. Resting at Nottingham he issued letters of array to the lord-lieutenants of counties charging them to muster all trained men and to equip them well in readiness thoroughly to defend him and his realm from the traitorous attacks of "one Henry Tydder, son of Edmund Tydder, son of Owen Tydder, who of his insatiable ambition and covetousness, pretended title to the crown of England."

By the beginning of August Henry of Richmond had landed on the coast of Wales and had sent letters and issued a proclamation asserting his claim. Some of his chief supporters were Welsh, and to them he wrote in terms implying that there could be no question as to the rightness of his attempt to secure the throne: "purposing in all haste possible to descend into our realm of England, not only for the adoption of the crown, unto us as of right appertaining, but also for the oppression of that odious tyrant, Richard late Duke of Gloucester, usurper of our said right. . . . We desire and pray you and upon your allegiance strictly charge and command you that immediately upon sight hereof, with all such power as ye may make, defensibly arrayed for the war, ye address you towards us, without any tarrying upon the way."

King Richard, on the borders of Sherwood Forest, heard swift tidings of Richmond's landing and soon of his steady marching from the west with a growing

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army of supporters. He distrusted, with reason, more than one of his nobles—even the chief officials of his household—and among them Lord Stanley, husband of the Countess Margaret. He issued proclamations declaring certain of them traitors; then seizing the young Lord Strange, Stanley's son, who was in attendance at court, he wrung from him a confession that his father was in the confidence of the invader. Stanley himself disappointed Henry by his tardy response to the command to meet him, fearing that Richard would take his son's life in revenge.

By the middle of August Richmond had reached Lichfield, and King Richard was setting out from Nottingham with an immense array of armed men whom he had succeeded in collecting. A curious detail is preserved in the archives of the city of York, always devotedly ready to serve their former 'Governor of the North.' The mayor was ordered to send up to the King "in all possible haste, eighty citizens, each soldier being furnished with ten shillings in advance for ten days' wages." On his way thither, mounted on his great white horse, the King rested at Leicester, and tradition says that he slept at the Blue Boar Inn, and that in the hollow bottom of his bedstead, which was carried about with him, he kept a large sum of money. This was never used for its purpose of maintaining his army, but was found, eighty years later, in its secret hiding-place.

One of the curious features of the time was the mingling of pomp and show with the grim business of war. We read that in setting out from Leicester

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with his troops King Richard, attired in magnificent robes and wearing his crown upon his head, rode to encounter the opposing army, which was said to be but half as large as his own. The next day, after a night passed in sight of the foe, he rose dispirited and doubtful, but assembled his leaders and appointed them their places. He sent an imperative message to Lord Stanley to join him at once, on peril of the instant execution of his son, Lord Strange. Stanley's undaunted reply was that he had other sons and was "not minded yet to come." A similar reply to Richmond's urgent plea, sent at almost the same moment, was that he would come "in time convenient." As the battle progressed the prudent noble joined his forces with Henry's and thus helped to the successful issue which seemed to be never in doubt. The unhappy Richard at the head of a large contingent showed defiant valour, and, when urged to escape, he protested, "I will not budge a foot: I will die King of England." In less than three hours the battle of Bosworth Field was over; the royal crown had fallen unheeded into a clump of bushes, and its defeated wearer lay mortally wounded on the trampled ground.

A few hours later the dead King's body was carried ignominiously behind a mounted soldier toward Leicester, where it was buried in the Grey Friars' graveyard. The recovered crown was taken to the Earl of Richmond and placed on his head by Lord Stanley, his stepfather, amid the eager shouts of the soldiers, "King Henry! King Henry!" Thus began the new monarchy.

In spite of the political disturbances, the pro-

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scriptions and bloodshed of these years, many humble people seem to have kept on with their work quietly, only faintly concerned in the quarrels and pretensions of princes and the feuds and fights of nobles. Life in mediæval times, and later, was a mingling of greatly contrasted things. Harsh punishments and cruel practices went on among a gay and kindly population; individual tyrannies existed side by side with splendid instances of individual piety and devotion; sickness and disease, pestilence and war ravaged the towns and the country-side, and as soon as they were over the courageous and light-hearted inhabitants resumed their daily toil and pursued their accustomed way. Among such was our diligent student and worker, Caxton. The waves of political conflict must have beaten upon the outer walls of the great Abbey of Westminster, which sheltered as many fallen fortunes and rising endeavours as a small township. The march of armed men, the rattle of weapons, and the cries of the victorious and of the defeated alike must have echoed there in this very year of 1485.

The Princess Elizabeth had been separated from her mother by King Richard's orders and had been borne in safe custody to a remote northern castle; the Queen-Dowager herself was placed with her younger daughters in Westminster Palace for a few months and afterward sent to the Abbey of Bermondsey, where she remained until her death. At the very time when King Richard was preparing to leave London for the final struggle, Caxton finished one of his most famous books and one of his most arduous translations. The latter was *The Life of*

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*St Winifred*, which was, as he states, "reduced into Englysshe by me William Caxton," and her martyrdom is commemorated as the origin of the Holy Well in Flintshire. This book had a ready sale, it seems, since this saint was regarded most devoutly at that time in England, and King Henry VII built a chapel over the well which marked the source. This, in its restored form, is still one of the attractions of the little Flintshire town as well as a centre of devotion for the faithful.<sup>1</sup> The other work was the "noble and joyous book entytled le morte Darthur . . . reduced in to Englysshe by syr Thomas Malory Knyght . . . and by me devyded in to xxj bookes chapytred and emprynted and fynysshed in thabbey Westmestre the last day of Juyl the yere of our Lord MCCCClxxxv. Caxton me fieri fecit." This was perhaps the most modern of the books hitherto printed by Caxton, as Sir Thomas Malory wrote it in 1470.

We may get some idea of Caxton's industry and capacity for work from the colophon at the end of another book produced during the same eventful year. This was the ancient and beautiful romance of *The knight Paris and the fair Vienne*, originally in Old Spanish, but in the fifteenth century translated into Provençal—the true language of romance. After a

<sup>1</sup> As a result of the improved modern system of water-supply to the town, St Winifred's Spring has become so diverted from its original course that the well threatens to run dry. Though efforts are being made to preserve sufficient force of water to maintain it, there is every probability that soon, as in the case of many of the old wells of London, there will remain only the name of St Winifred's as a memento of its historical fame.

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period of neglect it was revived and translated into French and other Romance tongues. Caxton turned it into English and printed it, the only previously printed version being one in Italian which appeared three years earlier. His last page runs :

“ Thus endeth thystorye of the noble and valyaunt knyght parys and the fayre vyenne doughter of the doulphyn of Vyennoy translated out of frensshe into englysshe by Wyllam Caxton at Westmestre fynysshed the last day of August the yere of our lord MCCCClxxv and enprynted the xix day of decembre the same yere and the fyrst yere of the regne of kyng Harry the seventh. Esplicit p Caxton.”

These were the days before there were any books written actually for children, but it is interesting to find that a great French bishop, a contemporary of Caxton, thought so highly of the romance, *Paris and Vienne* that he translated it into Latin for the use of his godchildren, the son and daughters of a chancellor. So far as is known there is only one copy in existence of Caxton's printed translation : it is kept in the British Museum.

At the accession of Henry VII Caxton was getting on in years. He was well past the prime of life, and, though full of interest and energy, less able to undertake alone the various duties belonging to the production of books. And besides the great labour of translation, the various materials needed in the process of printing were almost all prepared, or even made, by the workers. The parchment only was manufactured elsewhere and was procured ready for use. But the type, the frames, the ink, the engraving

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and other tools, were made on the spot, and when the sheets were printed the decorations and binding were still to be done. So precious was parchment that any spare or spoilt sheets were used as lining for the covers, or were cut into strips and inserted to strengthen the folds. In this way, curiously enough, have been preserved some fragments of Caxton's printing which would otherwise have vanished.

From 1485 onward one of the workmen at the Red Pale seems to have taken a more prominent position and to have shared his master's confidence. This was Wynkyn de Worde, who was destined in a few years' time to stand in Caxton's place and carry on his work. With the beginning of the new reign there came a promise of peace and stability which had for long been absent, and in the added security of its good government the arts of peace, among which was the printing of books, began to flourish. In the next chapter we shall share with Caxton and other industrious citizens of London and Westminster in the rejoicings and anticipations which accompanied the coronation of Henry Tudor.

## CHAPTER XII: *The Tudor Rose*

**W**ITHIN a week of his victory at Bosworth Field, Henry, Earl of Richmond, was entering London in great pomp as king. It is said that the indignity with which King Richard's body was treated was not by the orders of Henry, and indeed that he gave commands (which were little heeded) that it should be interred with due honour. Beyond the gates of the city London's Lord Mayor and aldermen met the approaching procession and escorted the King through crowded streets of shouting citizens to St Paul's Cathedral. There was held a service of thanksgiving, and Henry's banners of war were solemnly hung in the chapel of the Holy Ghost. The Bishop and clergy ordained processions to various churches during the week as the religious celebration of the victory.

Though publicly claiming the throne of England as rightful heir, Henry was conscious of the weakness of the argument of lineal descent. The house of York, descended from the third son of Edward III, had one living male representative, while Henry's claim was based upon his descent from John of Gaunt, Edward III's fourth son. Following the unhappy precedents of monarchs who seize their thrones, Henry's first act was to imprison that representative, Edward, the young Earl of Warwick, in the Tower. He was the son of Edward IV's brother George, Duke of Clarence, and of the Lady Isabel, daughter of the King-maker; and, at the time of the battle



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of Bosworth, he was in honourable captivity in a Yorkshire castle, in company, it was said, with the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV.

When the lad, aged fifteen, was sent to the Tower, the young Princess was given back to her mother's charge in the convent at Bermondsey. It was fully intended that Henry should unite the rival houses of Lancaster and York by marriage with this lady, but the King first hastened on the preparations for his coronation and for the assembling of Parliament. The crowning was fixed for the 30th of October, and joyful anticipations were formed of the triumphant opening of the new reign. But a terrible misfortune broke over the country. With the beginning of September an unknown and malignant disease made its appearance; soon it struck down people of all ages and all classes throughout England. Its ravages were hardly felt in Ireland and Scotland, but it spared no part of England, and was especially fatal in the South. The sickness began in London early in October, and in nearly every case it proved fatal. The Lord Mayor who had welcomed Henry, and several of the aldermen, were among the earliest victims. A new mayor was appointed to carry on the great civic preparations, and he, too, died from the disease.

Preparations for the coming coronation were thus carried out under gloomy circumstances, but such general relief was felt that there seems to have been no mention of the pestilence as an ill omen. The King set himself, without delay to the necessary business of reigning, simply announcing his accession to the great States of Europe, and summoning a Parliament

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to assemble during the first week of November. During this time he was in residence with the Bishop of London at his palace at Fulham ; and a day or two before his coronation he attended a banquet at the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Bouchier. The journey from Fulham to Lambeth was made by river, in the Bishop's state barge, but when His Majesty left for the Tower he went in martial procession, riding through the streets. At London Bridge he was met by the Lord Mayor and aldermen, who again welcomed him to the capital, and presented him with a thousand marks. Undoubtedly Caxton was present with the members of his guild. Arrived at the Tower, the King bestowed honours on some few of his followers ; his uncle, Jasper Tudor, was created Duke of Bedford, and Lord Stanley, his stepfather, Earl of Derby ; both were made members of his Council. A few knighthoods were given, but there were no lavish rewards scattered among his supporters. The Earl of Oxford was appointed Constable of the Tower, ' with charge of the lions.'

On the morning of October 30th we may be sure that the citizens of London were early astir. Large numbers were actually to take part in the ceremonies of the day, either by walking in the civic procession or by lining the streets ; every one else would desire to be a spectator. The mayor and aldermen, in their robes of office, their henchmen and heralds, officers and footmen, the various city guilds, with their banners and emblems—all claimed the right to share in the sovereign's stately journey to Westminster for his crowning. Then there were the two bands of

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'Watches,' or city police—as many as two hundred and forty, we are told—comprising pikemen in glittering corslets, billmen in leathern 'aperns,' and archers in white fustian jackets, with the arms of London emblazoned on back and front, bearing their bows and sheaths of arrows. Footmen with long staves cleared the way, and trumpeters on horseback marshalled the procession, all combined to make a gay and stirring scene in which Londoners delighted.

The King's procession and array were, however, much more modest than those of his two predecessors, Richard III and Edward IV. Perhaps this was partly due to his frugal temperament, perhaps to his discreet resolve to make no display until he had securely established his position. Two features which were novel have been handed down to us: one, that his escort of knights were mounted 'in French fashion,' two on one horse, powerful Flemish geldings; the other, that a band of archers rode close around his person, screening him from the general view. A little later Henry established this troop as a permanent bodyguard, always in attendance on his person, and in it we may see the origin of the famous 'Yeomen of the Guard.'

Arrived at Westminster Palace the usual ceremonies of robing took place in the great Hall; the King then, in the midst of a stately body of prelates and clergy, moved on into the Abbey with his retinue. Cardinal Bourchier placed the crown upon his head; he was duly anointed and acclaimed, and he returned to his palace-fortress, the Tower, through the rejoicing throngs of citizens. Feasts and holiday continued for

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the rest of the week, and the ordinary appearance of things was only just restored when Parliament opened.

Enthroned in Westminster Hall, Henry heard the speech of the Lord Chancellor, the eloquent Bishop of Worcester, and then proceeded to the great business in hand—the obtaining of parliamentary sanction of his position. Soon the statute was drawn up proclaiming it “enacted by the authority of this present Parliament that the inheritance of the crowns of the realms of England and of France be, rest, remain, and abide in the most royal person of our now sovereign lord King Harry the VII.” The way in which this was brought in gave the keynote of Henry’s later behaviour toward the nobles, for the Commons introduced it, the Lords gave their assent, and then the King declared “*Le Roy le voet en toutz pointz.*”

Then there were the revoking of the attainders of powerful Lancastrians and the solemn finding of the ‘late Duke of Gloucester’ and his adherents as traitors. Very wisely Henry followed this up with a proclamation of pardon to all others who, having resisted him, would now acknowledge him loyally. He also gave seats in his Privy Council to two bishops, one of whom was soon to become well known and greatly dreaded; these were Fox of Exeter and Morton of Ely.

In January the King married the Princess Elizabeth, a gentle and beautiful girl. Her mother, the Dowager-Queen Elizabeth, Edward IV’s widow, was in no way allowed to participate in the ceremony, though by

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Act of Parliament she was recognized as Queen-Dowager. Her life, like that of many women of high birth in those turbulent times, had been a chequered one. Raised to the throne as the consort of Edward IV, she had held the exalted rank of Queen with the consciousness that her royal husband's family and many of the nobility considered her as an inferior and an upstart. With a prudence which served her better than a sensitive apprehension of her position would have done, she used her power to raise the fortunes of her family, and her tact to restrain, unsuspected, some of the rash or dishonourable intentions of the King. At his death her guardianship of her sons and of the realm was of short duration. Her children wrested from her, the sons murdered, and the daughter the unwitting object of political aims and compromises, she had great need to be a woman of extraordinary resolution or of remarkable resignation to endure the time of perplexity and danger which followed her husband's death.

Apparently her daughter Elizabeth was taken from her side in the Bermondsey Convent early in January 1486 and given into the charge of the Countess of Richmond, the King's mother. His Majesty, though desirous to make this marriage for political reasons, was in no hurry to go through the ceremony. Indeed, not only his Parliament, but also his Privy Councillors had to convey to him the strong desire of his people to see the union accomplished, before he could be brought to fix the day. At last January 18th was appointed, and the Countess Margaret then gave up

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her secluded life and took to her heart as a daughter the young Elizabeth.

The people of London had again an opportunity of seeing a pageant of glittering array. The royal procession was one of great magnificence. The Princess Elizabeth in a litter with canopy of white cloth decked with silver, and attended by young maidens in white and blue velvet, was borne along from the Countess of Richmond's London residence of Cold Harbour. The streets, and not the river, now formed the route; the King's procession on horse and foot approached Westminster from the river-fortress of Baynard's Castle. The Mayor and aldermen, the guilds and companies, turned out in all their civic glory, and the trained bands, composed of apprentices and journeymen, formed little guards of honour around banners and emblems. The King, wearing a gown of purple velvet over a suit of white cloth of gold, rode a great bay horse, caparisoned with heavy needlework. The nobles of his retinue were hardly less gorgeous; tunics of embossed 'goldsmiths' work,' with heavy blue or crimson sleeves, hats and caps of coloured velvet decked with precious stones; and gay cloaks of varied colours, with tassels of gold and silver, completed their array. Bells jangled from the hangings and trappings of the horses, and the King's archers marched swingingly in a hollow square about the central figure. And everywhere were blazoned the Tudor Rose and the Portcullis of York.

Cardinal Bouchier, assisted by nearly all the English bishops, performed the ceremony at the Abbey, and

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the newly-wedded bride entered upon her life as Queen-Consort. The Countess Margaret was present at all great functions, comporting herself to the young Queen in a lowly and reverent manner. In the comparative seclusion of her home-life she was at once the tender counsellor and the affectionate mother. Herself a devoted lover of learning, she it was, no doubt, who imparted some knowledge to Queen Elizabeth, so that she emulated the Countess in founding or endowing places of learning. The Almonry at Westminster was, we may be sure, visited by the young Queen, for the Countess Margaret, like her namesake of Burgundy in earlier days, was a patron of the diligent Caxton. Curiously enough there are no books printed by Caxton still existing which bear the date of 1486, the first year of King Henry VII's reign, his marriage, and the birth of his eldest son.

It may be that illness, domestic trouble, or the municipal affairs in which he bore a part, absorbed him more than formerly. Or again he may have been busily engaged in preparing translations of some of the works printed in the next year, while his helper, Wynkyn de Worde, and his workmen produced service-books and kalendars.

We pictured how some seven or eight years earlier the debonair monarch Edward IV, his brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, and the young Prince of Wales, paid a visit to the Red Pale.<sup>1</sup> Similarly we may imagine the Countess Margaret and her daughter-in-law, the young Queen, being received by Caxton and shown some of the mysterious processes

<sup>1</sup> Chapter VII.

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and the wonderful results. Now there were more men at work, changes had been made in the types used, perhaps some improvement had taken place in preparing the ink, and also there was a greater display of illustrations. But the great chamber was still the same—crowded and dingy, and immensely interesting with its little groups of workers, its stacks of parchment, vessels of ink in different stages of readiness, trays of types, leather and vellum for binding, palettes of brilliant colours used for initials, the high bench at which the woodcuts were prepared, and the great framework of the press in the middle, shaking with the thuds that ‘enprynted’ a sheet at a time. The ladies now would see what the earlier visitors could not—the precious piles of printed books, ready for binding as they were wanted, and a growing heap of spoilt sheets or rejected leaves from which the binder took his edgings and foldings.

In the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey are stored some curious relics of those and the succeeding years. These relics are fragments of manuscripts and of printed paper actually used by Caxton and de Worde and the skeletons of rats which had carried them away to their holes in the Triforium.

Before the end of the year the royal couple were rejoicing in the birth of a young prince. He was named Arthur in compliment to the King’s Welsh ancestry, and we may imagine that there would be a demand for copies of Caxton’s ‘joyous book’ among the aristocrats of the court. The child was born in Winchester Castle and christened in the cathedral. There remain some interesting records



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of the stately ceremonial of the occasion, devised with loving care by the Countess Margaret. All was arranged beforehand so that no untoward hitch might occur: "A duchess shall carry the infant to the font, and if it be a prince an earl shall bear the train of the mantle which shall be of rich cloth of gold with a long train furred throughout with ermine; if it be a princess a countess shall bear the train." The cradle of estate was to be covered with crimson cloth of gold, and at the head were to be engraven the King's arms. It was to have two counterpanes of scarlet, furred with ermine and bordered with velvet, cloth of gold, or tissue.

It is pleasant to note that the Queen-Dowager was permitted to share in the joyful ceremony of the christening. The duchess appointed was the infant's aunt, the Princess Cecily, Elizabeth's sister, and the elaborate train was borne by her brother, the Marquis of Dorset. The Dowager-Queen awaited their coming in the cathedral, and presented, as her christening-gift, a rich cup of gold. The Earl of Derby (husband of Countess Margaret) gave 'a rich salt of gold covered,' and the Earl of Oxford, the King's most potent help at Bosworth, presented 'a pair of gilt basons.' In commemoration of the happy event the Queen founded a Lady-Chapel in Winchester Cathedral. This was in September 1486.

Rather more than a year later the young Queen left her peaceful home at Sheen Palace, where the royal couple seem mostly to have lived, to take part in the imposing ceremony of her coronation. Hitherto she has been Queen of courtesy; but now the Council

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and advisers had at length induced the reserved and self-contained King to bestow upon her the due honour of crowning. When at last he had consented, Henry's first care was to make it the occasion of unparalleled magnificence. In the dark November days of 1487 London and Westminster were again gladdened with a royal pageant. The Queen and the Countess Margaret were first brought in the royal barge from Greenwich to the Tower, and then followed a great civic display. Again the mayor, sheriffs and aldermen played their wonted part, "with diverse and many worshipful commoners chosen out of every craft, with their liveries in barges freshly furnished with banners and streamers of silk, richly beaten with the arms and badges of their crafts." Gay music, trumpets, and clarions and other minstrelsies accompanied the progress. It is reasonable to suppose that among "the diverse and worshipful commoners" was to be seen Master William Caxton wearing a heavy furred robe, and keenly observant of all the changing scene.

The King awaited the ladies' arrival at the Tower steps, and greeted his wife and his mother in a "manner right joyous and comfortable to behold." The next day the coronation took place. The city was decorated in the most sumptuous way; heavy tapestries and arras of cloth of gold and velvet were hung from the upper windows of the houses; wreaths and branches of trees made festoons across the road, and, in readiness for the revelries at night, lanterns were slung from every corner or were placed in numbers on wrought-iron frames in curious designs. All along the way

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stood the City Companies in order of their greatness and importance, the wealthiest being nearest to St Paul's Cathedral, and at intervals were stationed bands of "well-singing children, some arrayed like angels and others like virgins, to sing sweet songs as her grace passed by."

With these, and other pretty touches, was shown the people's appreciation of the fact that it was the young Queen's festival. She was borne in a great open litter under a canopy carried by four Knights of the Bath; the King's mother, in a smaller litter, followed immediately behind. Before them rode, on grey palfreys, six baronesses wearing crimson velvet, and the Duke of Bedford, Jasper Tudor. We read that the Queen wore "a kirtle of white cloth of gold and mantle of the same, furred with ermine. Her long fair hair streamed down her back, and on her head she wore a coronet of gold, glittering with precious stones." She spent that night in Westminster Palace, and the next day she became the central figure of a still more imposing procession that passed from the great Hall to the Abbey.

Clad in a kirtle and mantle of purple velvet, furred with bands of ermine, and wearing a circlet of gold upon her head, she passed along the streets, preceded and surrounded by all the great nobles and ecclesiastics of the realm. The Bishops of Winchester and Ely supported her on either side; the Princess Cecily carried her train. The staff with the dove was borne by the Earl of Arundel, the sceptre by the Duke of Suffolk, and the crown on its velvet cushion by the Duke of Bedford. A long train of knights

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and barons, their heralds and pursuivants, and as many bishops and abbots, robed and mitred, passed in through the great west door and up to the altar. "The King with his mother and a goodly sight of ladies stood on a stage from which they could conveniently behold the ceremony."

In the afternoon the newly-crowned Queen gave a banquet in Westminster Hall, the King and the Countess Margaret being spectators 'in a latticed gallery.' With due ceremony the Queen's Majesty was served by a peer on bended knee; two of her ladies sat at her feet; the Countess of Oxford and the Countess of Rivers, members of leading Lancastrian and Yorkist houses respectively, knelt on either hand and 'at times held a kerchief before her grace.'

Only one further ceremony at all approaching the magnificence of this is recorded as being shared by the Queen—the festival of the Knights of the Garter held on St George's Day in the following year. We read that the King rode in procession from Windsor Castle to St George's Chapel, surrounded by his 'brother-knights,' attired in the gorgeous robes of the Order. The Queen and the Countess of Richmond were in a massive chariot drawn by six horses, coach and horses being caparisoned in cloth of gold. Behind them rode a score of ladies of high birth on white palfreys, with saddles of cloth of gold, and white roses emblazoned on all their trappings. Then came a knight leading the Queen's horse, with saddle and housings of cloth of gold, and silver bells jingling on the heavy fringes.

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King Henry, unlike Edward IV, had no love for pageantry and display, and he usually grudged the cost of royal entertainments. Very occasionally, however, he found it politic to indulge his subjects with an imposing spectacle, but toward its expenses, however, those participating were expected to contribute. There is always connected with his name the remembrance of his stern and systematic repression of the barons, their independence, their great possessions, and their large bands of retainers. At present he was only feeling his way, but soon he made it quite clear that money-making pursuits, instead of money-spending pursuits, had his patronage. Besides his favourable treaties with other nations he was careful to foster trade at home. He took the Guild of St John Baptist, of the Woolmen and 'Merchant Taylors,' under his special protection, even becoming a member of that body. Since peace is the first essential for prosperous industry, the King determined to put down the frequent quarrels between the great nobles and their partisans by making forfeit the lands of those who 'partook of routs and unlawful assemblies.' In his second Parliament there were also passed laws against usury, a practice which greatly hampered trade, and others whereby peaceful foreign merchants might journey about the country.

The King personally visited many of the districts where he suspected disloyalty. Setting out from his mother's manor of Torrington, in Devonshire, he went across country to Suffolk and Norfolk, keeping his Christmas feast at Norwich, and thence journeyed

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to Cambridge and thence on to London. Perhaps it was due to this that we find recorded the King's command to 'make and repair' the road from London to Cambridge. The eastern approach to the capital lay through the Essex marshes, and the fenlands of Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire were entirely undrained as yet. His mother, the Countess Margaret, a few years later built and endowed two colleges at Cambridge, Christ's and St John's, and two Readerships in Divinity at Oxford. Henry so far resembled her as to support and to protect places of learning.

London began to assume a different appearance with the greater security of person and possessions under Henry's government. The King rebuilt the river-fort, Baynard's Castle, so that it became more of a palace and less of a fortress; he pressed on the slowly-moving work of building the chapel of Henry VI in Westminster Abbey, intending to bring the coffin of that monarch from St George's Chapel, Windsor, where his predecessor, Richard III, had placed it, to rest within the Abbey walls. This was never done, and the chapel by degrees lost its connexion with Henry Plantagenet; before it was finished it became known as the Chapel of Henry VII, and as such remains the most distinguished monument to his memory. In the building of it two smaller chapels, those of St Faith and of the Holy Trinity, with which Caxton must have been familiar, were demolished.

Another memorial of Henry Tudor's kingly taste for building was the hospital, for one hundred poor persons, on the ruins of the Savoy Palace. This,

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the residence of John of Gaunt, wrecked by the populace in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, had lain in ruins ever since. The chapel (which alone remains to-day) was the chapel for the bedesmen and bedeswomen of the hospital.

## CHAPTER XIII: *The New Order*

**A**LTHOUGH Henry of Richmond had become king, not only by conquest, but also by parliamentary sanction, which expressed the general will of the nation, there were powerful individuals and a restless minority who were ill-content. The open disaffection was led in England by Lord Lovell and John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, whom Richard III had named as his heir. But there were also plots and intrigues elsewhere, the fact that Henry's was 'an island-realm' in no way preventing the continental rulers from interesting themselves in its fortunes. It will be noticed that Henry still retained the title of 'King of France,' as, indeed, did all his successors until George III. But it was an empty show, as the seaport of Calais, one of the staples of the wool trade, was all that remained of the once extensive heritage of the Angevin sovereigns.

Indeed, the kingdom of France had become so consolidated that only Brittany, of all the old feudal signories, remained independent. There Henry Richmond had sheltered until he could strike his blow, and to its ruler he was indebted for help in gaining the throne. The King of France, too, had been friendly and had advanced money for the equipment of his forces; for this Henry had left as sureties the Marquis of Dorset and a knight.

But in the once-powerful Burgundy, now becoming absorbed in the Empire, there was a centre of intrigue against the Tudor King. The widowed Duchess



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Margaret, Edward IV's sister, bitterly resented the suppression of the house of York, and welcomed and sheltered any conspirators against Henry. There originated and was carried out the plan for training an Oxford lad, named Lambert Simnel, to impersonate the young Edward Plantagenet, son of the Duke of Clarence, whom Henry kept in honourable custody in the Tower. While the clumsy imposture was being exposed and contemptuously dealt with, another of similar import was being devised. A Flemish youth of Tournay, of pleasing manners and adventurous mind, who had travelled much in the service of Burgundian nobles and merchants, was received by the Duchess Margaret at her court and exalted to the position of reputed heir to the English throne. It was given out that he was Prince Richard, the younger of the two sons of Edward IV, who were imprisoned in the Tower by Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

When our story ends the lad was still learning his part, in tutelage at Bruges, as a royal prince, with industriously circulated reports of his attainments, his purpose, and the growing number of his supporters and adherents. Thus were fanned the hopes of many disappointed persons in the political world who were ready to adventure something to disturb the established order of things. The Duchess resolutely nursed her animosity against Henry VII, and his marriage with her niece Elizabeth seemed only to inflame her against the Queen and her mother for thus leaguering themselves with the enemy who had overthrown their house. Her devices helped to make the wearer of the crown as uneasy as she could

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desire for some years before the actual issuing of Perkin's proclamation, though with the cold resolution which distinguished him Henry put a brave face upon the matter.

It is always remembered of this first Tudor King that his great achievement was the depression of the powerful barons and the fostering of the merchant class. Before Caxton's death in 1491 the astute Morton, Bishop of Ely, had become Archbishop of Canterbury by the King's wish. He, unlike his illustrious predecessor, Thomas Becket, in no way disappointed his royal master in his new position. His presidency of the small judicial court, which the King had formed out of his Council, permitted him to exercise the peculiarly penetrating judgment which distinguished him. Powerful and headstrong nobles, confronted with the passionless administration of the Star Chamber, found themselves paying enormous fines in order to maintain their positions and prestige in their own demesnes. The statutes against retainers, 'maintenance' and 'liveries'—that is, against the armed retinues which added to the glory of their state and made each one almost a little king—might perhaps have been ignored by men whose wills were apt to be a law to themselves. But the searching inquiries of the King's secretaries and the famous 'Morton's fork' were not to be evaded.

King Henry, gloomily regarding the imposing band of tenants and serving-men assembled in an earl's courtyard to do honour to his royal guest, waived aside the proffered compliment and insisted: "You must speak with my Secretary, my lord Earl." The

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interview could but end in one way—an offering or a fine, call it what you will, from a noble to his king as earnest of his humble loyalty. Where display was absent and no penalty therefore could be incurred for it, the Cardinal-Chancellor's other horn impaled the victim: "Since you eschew vain expenditure, my lord, it must follow that you have where-withal to support the King in his defence of the realm."

In Lytton's fine romance, *The Last of the Barons*, we have a stirring picture of the power and magnificence of the noble houses of Edward IV's day, the head and crown of which was that of Warwick. Nearly as powerful, and maintaining its position later, was the great family of Clifford, which was descended from William the Lion, King of Scotland in the twelfth century, and allied with the royal Plantagenets by marriage. Sometimes supporters and sometimes opponents of the house of Warwick, the Cliffords have left their mark upon the history of the times, the lands they owned, and the literature which revives for us the past. The Earl of the late fifteenth century was prudent enough to avoid the exactions of Henry VII, though his sovereign jealously regarded his possessions. Hereford, on the borders of Wales, still boasts the traditions of the ancient Cliffords; Skipton, in Yorkshire, was the centre of their northern territories; Brougham Castle, in Westmorland, came into the family as dowry of an heiress, as did Appleby Castle in the same county. The Countess Clifford of those days, when she became a widow, was sheriff of the county. Indeed, the barons of Westmorland were for long to

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be almost independent of the sovereign, so far removed was that debatable shire from any real control of the King.

The manor of Threlkeld, beyond Penrith in the fastnesses of Blencathara and Skiddaw, was the scene of the romantic disguise of the heir of the house as a shepherd's son during the ascendancy of the Yorkists in Edward IV's reign. A Clifford is mentioned by Shakespeare,<sup>1</sup> another by Southey; the unfortunate heir, 'the Shepherd Earl,' is the subject of Wordsworth's *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*; his mother's misfortunes are mentioned in *The Waggoner*, and his later retreat at Bardon Tower in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. The name of their London mansion by the Thames is still preserved in Clifford's Inn, which, after the fourteenth century, was, like the ancient foundation of the Knights Templars, rented to the law-students.

In the *Paston Letters* are many revelations of the lawless and violent dealings of the great landowners in claiming or asserting their rights and settling their disputes with their neighbours or tenants. Driving off cattle, burning of barns, even the besieging of houses and the forcible detention of opponents, supplemented the slow processes of the law or were substituted for them. The Duke of Norfolk on one occasion entered Caistor Manor, owned by a member of the Paston family, drove off a flock of sheep and a number of oxen, and carried away a hundred pounds' worth of furniture. For three years he compelled the manorial tenants to pay their rents to himself; and he re-

<sup>1</sup> *II King Henry VI*, Act V, Sc. II.

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linquished his position only on being paid a sum of five hundred marks. An almost similar instance occurred at Hellesden, which was raided by the Duke of Suffolk. The list of goods removed has been preserved, and includes "ij fedder beddes with ij bolsters, iiij materas, iij cortayns of blewe lakeram, vi payre of sheetes of ij webbes," evidently from the chambers of the manor; implements from the 'botere' and the 'brewhere,' such as "ij pantrye knyves" and "a syff to syft malt." There were also removed "j mortar of marbell with a pestell" from the kitchen, and "gear taken out of church."

It must be added that the smaller landowners quarrelled and terrorized each other by displays of force as readily as the barons, and that they rarely waited for a legal decision in any dispute before taking up arms. Hence there was real need for the stern measures of Henry in establishing order and compelling observance of the 'King's peace,' even in the territories of the most powerful noble.

The Paston family had been one of solid competence and integrity, and soon after Henry's accession John Paston was appointed Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk; to him it fell to prevent the restless malcontent, Lord Lovell, from finding safe hiding-places in the "ports and creeks and other places upon the coasts" of the Eastern counties. Also the Lambert Simnel rising was expected first in that district, and the King journeyed through Suffolk and Norfolk in order to animate the loyalty of his subjects. John Paston was made "an esquier of the body" to the King, and in the course of his official duties was

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responsible, whenever the disturbed condition of the country made it necessary, for raising and bringing in person to the Lord High Admiral, "a company defensively arrayed, horsed and harnessed to be at the King's wages" and to serve as a troop of fighting-men.

In spite, however, of a warlike tendency in the manner of life of the fifteenth century, there were many characteristics which show that it was not entirely barbarous. A travelled Italian writer of the time comments upon the good manners of English gentlemen, and this was probably due to the training of the feudal system, where the position of every one was clearly defined. The princely households of great barons and ecclesiastics were schools of manners as well as colleges for the learning of clerkly and knightly arts. The rough plenty of the table and the crude extravagance of personal attire did not exhaust the capacity for enjoyment of the fifteenth-century gentleman or the lady his wife. Compared with the embarrassing number of petty possessions of an individual of to-day the personal treasures may seem few in number, but they stood for their owners' love of beauty and intellectual interest. Some wills and inventories amongst the Paston Letters may be taken as typical. Margaret Paston, sister-in-law of the Sheriff John already mentioned, bequeaths, among a considerable amount of solid furniture and household goods, to her daughter Anne "my green hangyng in my parlour at Mauteby, a standing cuppe with a cover gilt with a flat knoppe, xij silver spoones, my best corse girdill, blewe harneised with silver and

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gilt, my primer, my bedes of silver enamelled." To Margery, her daughter-in-law, she leaves some silver and "my masse book with all mine awter clothes," and to another daughter-in-law, her "prymer clad with grene velvet."

A special point of interest attaches to the "Inventory of Englysshe Boks of . . ."—probably the John Paston already named. They are eighteen in number and include four books on Heraldry, and one on "Knyghthod and the Maner of makynge Knyghts, Jousts and Tourneaments, paces holden by Soldiers and Challenges" . . ., a service-book, given him by Percival Robsart; two books of Cicero, *de Senectute* and *de Amicitia*; a version of the *Chronicle of England*, beginning at the "Dethe of Arthur, Guy Erl of Warwick, King Richard Cur de Lyon . . . to Edward the iij"; and two books of Chaucer. All these in manuscript; but there remains one, "Item, a Boke *in preente* of the Pleye of the Chess."

This collection was quite a creditable library for a country squire of the time, and we may imagine that in this and in any similar household the few books possessed were carefully treasured and rarely permitted to be handled. In another inventory, that of the possessions of Sir James Gloys, Priest of St Clement's, Norwich, there occur the names of a few books, none of which is printed: a "boke of Statutes," a "boke of xij chapetyres of Lyncoln," "a boke of Sofistry," "a boke of Seynt Thomas de Veritatibus, a red boke with Hugrecio and Papie, iij bokes of Sofistry and maney other small bokes," in a coffer. There was also a copy of a book to be

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closely connected with Caxton in the course of another few years, the *Vitæ Patrum*.

Returning to the Red Pale and a consideration of Caxton's later work, we find that early in 1487 he undertook the printing of *The Book of Good Manners*, at the request of a fellow-member of the Mercers' Guild. The book was translated from the work of an Augustin friar of Paris, to whom was committed part of the education of the young son of Charles V of France. Soon this was followed by a life of Christ, *Speculum Vitæ Christi*, largely taken from a French version of the work by St Bonaventura. There is an anticipation of the great poem of Milton in the heading of the first chapter: "A devoute medytacion of the grete Councyll in Neuene for the restorynge of man and hys sauvacyon . . ." and "All the Courte of Neuene wondrynge and commendying the souerayne wysedome assented wel here to . . ."

This was the first of a succession of religious books, another of which was *The Doctrinal of Sapience*, consisting of that which "ought the prestres to lerne and teche to theyr parysshes." The earliest Statutes of the Realm to be printed were those of the Parliament of the first year of King Henry VII's reign, and they were issued from Caxton's Press at about this time. The existing remains show that a large variety of works were being produced during the last few years of his life, including some second editions of early books. In preparing these we read that the diligent enthusiast went through the pages most carefully, correcting errors and removing imperfections. By this time he had introduced several improvements



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in types and methods ; there is greater evenness of spacing and regularity of lines than in the first issues. The second edition of the *Game and Playe of the Chesse* shows also an alteration in matter. The dedication and inscription to George, Duke of Clarence, are removed and replaced by a prologue by Caxton himself. In it, after the manner of men getting on in years, he praises the 'good old times' in which was "every man in his office contente, and stood the cytees of the royaume in worship and renome . . . how was renommed the noble royaume of England, alle the world dradde hit and spake worshyp of hit."

Two years before his death we find an interesting connexion between Caxton and one of the great ladies of the time. In 1489 the Duchess of Somerset, mother of the Countess Margaret and therefore maternal grandmother of the King, desired Caxton to translate for her the romance of *Blanchardin and Eglantine*, a French love-story. Apparently she wished it translated only, but soon Caxton printed it, with the inscription, "Unto the ryght noble puyssant & excellent prynesse my redoubted lady my lady margarete duchess of Somercete moder unto our naturel and soverayn lord. . . ."

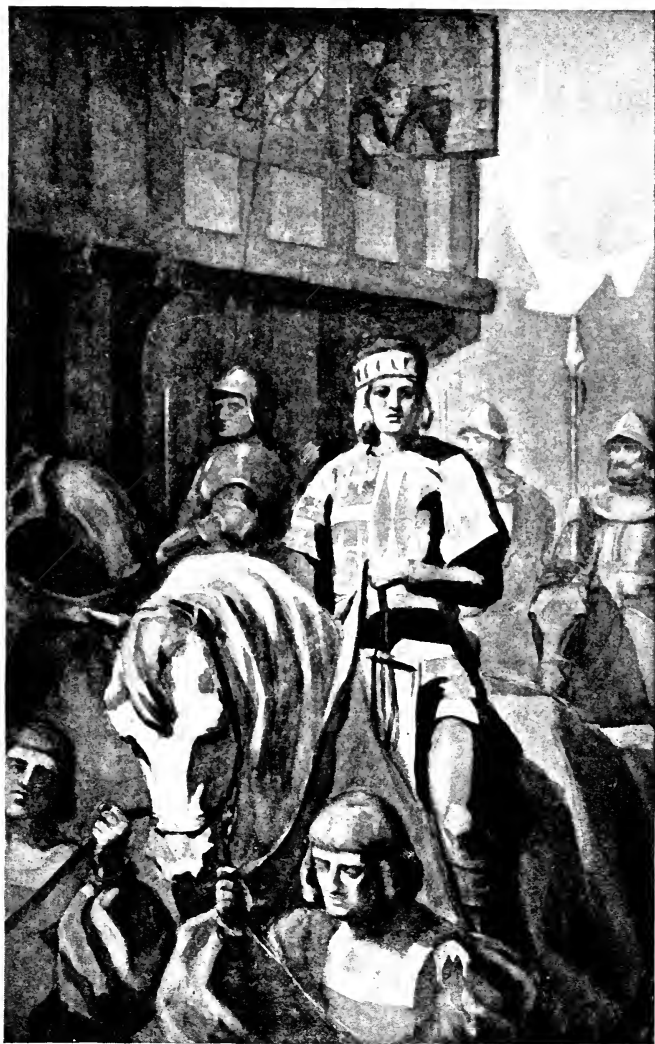
In the same year Caxton translated and printed, by command of the King himself, *The Fayts of Arms and Chivalry*, "which book, being in French, was delivered to me, William Caxton, by the most Christian King, my natural sovereign lord, King Henry VII in his Palace of Westminster." The following year he brought out the first English version of the devotional work known as the *Fifteen Oes*,

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each prayer beginning with 'O' This, as he states explicitly, was "by commandment of our liege ladé Elizabeth by the grace of God Quene of Englande and of Fraunce, & also of the right hye & most noble pryncesse Margarete Moder unto our soverayn lorde the Kyng."

It is curious to notice that no inkling would be gained from any of the books and fragments of Caxton's writing and printing that three different sovereigns sat on the throne of England during his work at the Red Pale, and that each had to scheme and fight for his crown. The fact suggests two or three things: one, that the political ferment of royal and baronial disputes passed very much over the heads of the plain citizens of the towns and the yeomen of the country. When their trade and manner of life were violently interfered with they would accommodate themselves as well as they could to their circumstances, and only when hard pressed would they take sides or espouse a cause. Townsmen were then, as always, able to be more independent of the aristocratic class than the farmers and peasants in rural districts, and thus were less subject to be enrolled as 'horsed and harnessed' fighters in a cause which they neither understood nor cared about.

Another point suggested is the secrecy and immunity from criticism with which plots and counterplots could be hatched when the great body of the people stayed in one place, when communication was slow and difficult, and when the government was carried on by small and powerful minorities. We may imagine that when, in order to defeat the intentions of



The young Earl of Warwick riding from the Tower  
Eileen Robinson and Irene Ward



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the supporters of Lambert Simnel, King Henry caused Edward, the young Earl of Warwick, son of the Duke of Clarence, to be brought from the Tower and to ride through London, but few of the beholders understood what it was all about.

We see, therefore, that what looks like Caxton's easy transference of loyalty and admiring reverence from one sovereign to another was really the expression of the Englishman's typical readiness to accept things as they are. Perhaps we may interpret his use of the term 'natural' lord in these later inscriptions as showing his real attachment to the Lancastrian dynasty so rudely interrupted by Edward of York.

We are able to piece together a little of the intimate personal life of Caxton, as has already been seen, from entries and references in registers and accounts. In 1490 it is conjectured that he lost his wife, for in the parish records of St Margaret, Westminster, is the quiet reading: "Item: Atte burying of Maude Caxton for torches and tapres iijs. ijd." It may be that this event moved the busy worker to turn his attention to an old Latin treatise, which he translated and printed as *The Art and Craft to know Well to Die*. The diligent worker was then getting on in years, having either reached, or nearly attained, the threescore years and ten of active life which few can hope to pass. It is believed that there was no lingering illness and no long withdrawing from his beloved labour of translating and producing books, but that he was actually working at an unfinished task when he died.

His introduction to the *Art and Craft* just named

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began "When it is soo that what a man maketh or doeth it is made to come to some ende and yf the thyng be goode and well made it must nedes come to goode end."

He died in 1491 while at work on a translation of the *Vitæ Patrum*, and was buried in St Margaret's Churchyard within a stone's-throw of the scene of his happy labours for thirteen years. An entry in the parish register of accounts runs :

Atte bureying of William Caxton for iiij		
torches . . .	vjs	viijd
For the belle atte same bureying . . .	.	vjd

The usual charge for the 'knell,' as appears from other entries, was sixpence, but the term 'torches' probably covers various other items of expenditure belonging to the funeral of a prominent citizen.

Caxton seems to have left a married daughter, to whom, with staid affection, he no doubt left some small legacy. But of this we have no certain knowledge. What we do know is that he had not amassed wealth ; his labours had often been for love ; in spite of the patronage of kings and nobles there were many risks and losses attending his enterprise ; and so it came about that his bequest to his parish church consisted of some copies of the *Golden Legend* which he had printed. There was fitness in this, since the churches may almost be said to have contained the first libraries, and the clergy and churchwardens were the first booksellers. Even in Caxton's day there probably stood near the Abbey gates, or perhaps in St Margaret's porch, members of the 'Brothers

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of the Pen,' or writers, whose services might be hired for making wills, drawing up documents, or copying manuscripts. These copyists who had been wont to wait, furnished with a quire of paper, inkhorn and quills, and a narrow heavy desk, presently gave way to the vendors of materials and implements used in writing. Our term 'stationery' still enshrines the memory of the 'stations' near the cathedrals and churches where they stood.

## CHAPTER XIV: *Caxton's* *Successor*

**A**MONG the indirect testimony to Caxton's high character and kindly personality may be reckoned the attitude toward his work and memory adopted by his colleague and successor, Wynkyn de Worde. For the press at the Red Pale continued though its first master's hand was still, and from it there issued many fresh books as well as reprints of the earlier ones. The new owner made some alterations, devised and carried out improvements in paper, types, and style ; he also introduced title-pages, a concession which Caxton always refused to make. But for two years he forebore to use his own name, and announced the printed volumes as 'from Caxton's house at Westminster.' He naturally retained the sign of the Red Pale, and modified somewhat the Caxton monogram to suit his own. An almost comical feature is the variety of ways in which he contrived to spell his name—whether from choice or for the sake of variety we know not. But so did Shakespeare nearly a hundred years later. After more than five centuries of printing and the establishment of a standard spelling, we hardly recognize, until we read the writings of the time, how much individuality governed the form of words in those distant days. Besides personal uncertainty, which, if it is felt now, may be so easily removed, there seems to have been a fashion, or succession of fashions, in spelling.

The use of *y* for *i*, the interchangeable *u* and *v*



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(which now have their different provinces well defined), the occasional appearance of the early English *h* (then and for long years yet to be without its aspirate pretensions), the use of *c* in the termination *tion* (showing its French origin and pronunciation)—all these were fairly regular and established. But variations for reasons of taste seem to have occurred in de Worde's renderings of his name. It is made to look very Saxon in 'Wynkyn Theworde,' Latin in 'Wynandus de Worde,' Spanish in 'Vuinandi de Vuorde,' and Flemish enough in 'Winandi de Wordensis.' Certainly it was marvellously well suited to his trade.

Another of Caxton's workmen set up a press near the Temple, on the boundary of the City of London. The old 'Gates' still retained in terminations, as Bishopsgate, Aldgate, marked the original walls of London. As the city grew, the settlements beyond the walls were gradually included, and a ring of 'bars' show the larger extent of the capital. Holborn Bars and Temple Bar are noticeable survivals on the great western and south-western highways.

Other printing presses, too, were set up; one at Oxford had been established soon after Caxton's, and also one at St Albans. Richard Pynson, at Temple Bar, was proud to call Caxton "my worshipful maister." But though the new art progressed it was still something of an ingenious toy, a curiosity rather than a power, and was as yet to be wondered at, for people had no inkling of the coming days of restrictions and penalties in store for it.

Other changes were approaching and great events

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crowded on each other in the history of court and city. The King pursued his discreet policy of seeking for commercial possibilities on the Continent. That most interesting confederation of towns known as the Hanseatic League held most of the trade with the East and had a vantage ground which the English had not on the Baltic. They had undisputed possession of their fortress 'haus' near London Bridge, immune from all civic and legal restraints, and held much land on the Lincolnshire coast by Lynn and Boston. With this League the King arranged a more favourable treaty, and supported it by encouraging the building of ships of heavier draught and capacity for larger cargoes. Still the 'mercantile marine' and the Royal Navy were the same; but perhaps we may see in Henry VII's one ship of war, the *Great Harry*, the ancestor of our later formidable list of men-of-war.

Another increase of trading facilities came about through the King's negotiations against Venice, then the great Mediterranean commercial centre. Her chief rival was Pisa, for those were the days when individual towns, and not nations, led the way in buying and selling goods. Henry VII, always an astute bargainer, established a wool staple at Pisa, and concluded a treaty with Florence, the inland mart for Pisa, by which English wool was to be carried in English ships to Pisa instead of to Venice, and the famous wines of Malvoisie and the fabrics and spices from the East were to be imported similarly; the Venetian galleys and port being thus completely ignored.

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This treaty had a distinct bearing on the interests of Caxton and his successor, since the Italian towns were then in the forefront of civilization. Art and letters flourished, and the progress of printing was more marked in Italy than in its birthplace even, the German Mentz. There the script-form of the characters, known as the 'Black Letter' was discarded for the clear Roman type, which painfully won its place in England. The first English use of this was made in King Henry VIII's famous tract against Luther, which won for him the title *Fidei Defensor* still to be seen on our coins. Hence, among the treasures of the cargoes brought from the Mediterranean ports were books; at first they were entirely hand-written but by degrees they came to be chiefly printed copies.

The King and his mother were ready patrons of learning, and thus exercised great influence on the taste and pursuits of the age. We may imagine the King himself, perhaps with his young sons, visiting the Red Pale and being received by Wynkyn de Worde, as Edward IV and his boys had been by Caxton. The Countess Margaret, too, continued her patronage of the new art. A curious old book, known as the *Scala Perfectionis* (now among the treasures of a famous library), bears the inscription, "Englished and enprinted by command of Margaret Countess of Richmond and Derby in Will Caxton's house, by Wynkyn de Worde, anno salutis 1494."

Two years before Caxton died the Queen gave birth to a daughter. She was named Margaret, and in later days, by her marriage with James IV of Scotland,

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she became the ancestress of every English sovereign after Queen Elizabeth. In the year of Caxton's death another son was born to the royal pair; he was destined at his brother's death to become heir-apparent and to reign as Henry VIII. The favourite home of the King and Queen during these years was the palace at Eltham, which alternated with that at Sheen. About this time the King changed the latter name to Richmond, in his own honour, a word derived, it is believed, from the French *Rougemont*.

The favourite ambition of the monarch, after that of amassing wealth, was building. He undertook the restoration and enlargement of the chapel of St George at Windsor, and the building of a worthy memorial at Westminster to the memory of Henry VI. The ancient Lady Chapel was pulled down, with an adjacent smaller one; instead was designed a lofty and imposing chapel, rather attached to than actually within the Abbey, to contain the tomb of the last of the Plantagenets. The coffin of this sovereign reposed at the time in St George's Chapel at Windsor, having been brought thither from Chertsey Abbey by Richard III. This taste for building the King may have inherited from his mother. She was continually active in supporting and fostering works of mercy as well as places of learning. She endowed and enlarged the St James' 'Hospital for Leprous Maids,' about two miles from Temple Bar, in the fields that were afterward to become the surroundings of Piccadilly. At Oxford she endowed two Readerships in Theology, and founded two colleges at Cambridge, Christ's and St John's. Queen

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Elizabeth, her daughter-in-law, emulating her in this, established the similar foundation at Cambridge, called 'Queen's College,' in her honour.

Ten years after Caxton's death a great trouble befell the King and Queen. Prince Arthur, the future king, fell ill and died at the age of sixteen. His royal father had brought about his alliance with the Infanta Katharine of Spain, thus uniting England with the most powerful royal house of Europe. At the close of the following year the Queen died, and the splendid chapel, then newly begun at Westminster, had its first ceremony in the interment of her body. Her broken-hearted consort spared nothing to show her honour in her funeral; its pompous state excelled anything that had ever been seen on such an occasion.

The coffin was taken on a royal barge, draped with black and silver, from Richmond to St Paul's, where a service was held and a sermon delivered by Fisher, the eloquent Bishop of Rochester. Thence it was borne through mourning streets, hung with sad-coloured arras and tapestries, to Westminster Hall. "Tawny velvyt and black sarsnet" draped the walls, and silver embossings of the rose and portcullis shone in the sombre folds. A simple feature, like that which had appeared in her coronation, was that within the guard of barons and knights walked immediately about the bier as many maidens as there were years in the Queen's age, clad in white and bearing tapers. A white cross stretched the length of the velvet-covered coffin as it rested in the great central space of Westminster Hall.

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The coffin was then carried (along the route followed by the Queen's coronation procession) to the steps of the high altar in the Abbey, later to be transferred to a temporary resting-place until the building of the chapel should be finished. When this event finally came about the original intention had drifted from royal and other memories, and it was understood to be the chapel and memorial, not of Henry VI, but of Henry VII. This was in 1581, and eight years later King Henry himself was there laid to rest.

The Countess Margaret lived but a few months after the death of her beloved son. Her tomb may be seen in the splendid chapel, engraved with the Derby arms and insignia, while the antelope of the house of Lancaster lies at her feet. The symbolism of the daisies wrought in the iron of the gates proclaims Margaret, "the descendant and ancestress of Kings." The Bishop of Rochester preached her funeral sermon, and the great scholar Erasmus wrote the inscription for her tomb.

A relic of this distinguished and lovable woman is among the historic treasures of a famous house. A missal, richly bound and ornamented, the gift one New Year's Day of the King and Queen, bears in curious old script the greetings of their Majesties. In the King's hand are the words: "Madame, I pray you Remember me your loving Maister, Henry R"; and in the Queen's: "Madame I pray you forget not me. Pray to God that I may have part of your prayers. Elysabeth y<sup>e</sup> Queene."

None of the three husbands of the great Countess is buried in the Abbey. The Earl of Richmond's

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tomb is in St David's Cathedral, bearing the inscription, written by his widow, which named him "father and brother to Kings." His mother, Katharine of Valois, the widowed Queen of Henry V, whose marriage with Owen Tudor offended all her royal contemporaries, lay in an obscure recess not far from the stately Chapel of Henry VII. The Earl of Derby, Constable of England, the most powerful subject in the realm, had died some few years before the Countess Margaret. Strangely enough, his brother, Sir William Stanley, was implicated in the Perkin Warbeck rebellion; he was beheaded in the Tower and his great possessions were confiscated.

At the time when the Countess was laid to rest, there had reposed near by for a hundred years and more the bones of England's first great poet, Geoffrey Chaucer. His burial in the Abbey was, however, due to the fact that he was an official in the royal household and lived in Westminster in a house leased from the Abbot. But a leaden tablet with an inscription in recognition of his genius was placed on a pillar by Caxton, the devout lover of his verse. Thus our master-printer is linked with his illustrious predecessor by this evidence of his homage as well as in his production of printed copies of Chaucer's works.

It is usual to think of the fifteenth century as a dark and inglorious period, the stormy dawn of a bright and marvellous day. Yet there lived some whose names are great in our history: among scholars were those of Grocyn and Linacre, and among poets, Henryson, Skelton, and Dunbar of Scotland. Henryson was poet laureate in Caxton's latter years, and

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it was his proud duty to compose a panegyric upon the occasion of the young Prince Arthur being created Prince of Wales and on that of Prince Henry (afterward Henry VIII) being made Duke of York. Afterward he became tutor to the young Prince. In his own words :

The honor of England I lernyd to spelle  
In dygnite roiall that doth excelle.

But, as we have seen, there was then greater freedom in the matter of spelling than has since been the case.

Caxton lived just long enough to see the small beginning of English expansion of territory, for at his death the Bristol seamen, John and Sebastian Cabot, were about to start on their adventurous voyage to Newfoundland, in two sturdy little ships manned with prisoners released from gaol.

Of the men to become famous in the next reign, Colet, afterward Dean of St Paul's and founder of the famous school, was a young man ; so was Sir Thomas More, so was Wolsey, the future Cardinal and the last of the great ecclesiastical statesmen. Each of them must have seen and handled some copies of the half hundred books printed by Caxton at the Red Pale.

The principal literature produced in England in Caxton's own day consisted of ballads. These were the lineal descendants of the rhythmical narratives declaimed by minstrels, commemorating the lives and feats of heroes and adventurers, with many romantic additions. The most famous collection was that



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entitled "A Lytel Giste of Robin Hode," and this we find was one of those printed by Wynkyn de Worde at the command of the Countess Margaret.

The life and work of William Caxton, burgher, translator, printer and lover of books, are worthily and fittingly commemorated in Westminster. The modern Hall bears his name, and its windows, like those of St Margaret's Church, picture him as he lived and worked. The ancient bell had sounded over his head in his busy labours, and rang his knell when he went to rest in those far-off days of long ago.

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